

# BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

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Luplau





Builders of Modern India

# Mahadev Govind Ranade

Patriot and Social Servant

BY

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WILSON COLLEGE, BOMBAY

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TO A. H. K. IN  
COMMEMORATION  
OF SIX YEARS



## PREFACE

IN 1902 Rāo Bahādūr G. A. Mānkar published an account of Rāṇaḍe, entitled,—*A Sketch of the Life and Works of the Late Mr. Justice M. G. Rāṇaḍe*. In 1910 Mrs. Rāṇaḍe wrote a book of *Recollections*—आमच्या आयुष्यातील कांहीं आठवणी—which affords much important material dealing with the more intimate and personal side of her husband's life. In 1924 there appeared the comprehensive and detailed work by Mr. N. R. Phāṭak, entitled,—न्यायमूर्ति महादेव गोविंद रानडे यांचे चरित्र. I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to these three books. They have been the chief mines out of which the facts of Rāṇaḍe's career have been digged. A few other subsidiary sources of which use has been made are acknowledged in footnotes. It only remains to mention here a helpful article by Mr. V. V. Thākūr, which was published in the विविधज्ञानविस्तार of February, 1913.

The significance of Rāṇaḍe's life is to be found mainly in the far-spreading web of his mind—in his diagnoses of India's social, political, economic, and religious ills, and in the remedies that he both propounded and endeavoured to apply. It was an apt comparison when Professor Selby, of the Deccan College, referred to Rāṇaḍe as "Our Socrates." He challenged prevalent attitudes and stimulated thought, and the answers to India's complex problem, which in his mind were grasped as an inter-related whole, flowed out afterwards in divergent streams. There is fortunately much material available by means of which we can become

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acquainted with Rāṇaḍe's mind and thought. There are his contributions on a wide variety of subjects to the *Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sārvaajanik Sabhā*; his annual addresses at the meetings of the Indian National Social Conference, which are to be found in the volume, *Indian Social Reform*, edited by Mr. C. Y. Chintāmaṇi; and his writings on economic subjects, the chief of which have been collected together in a volume entitled, *Essays on Indian Economics*. Then there are the essays and speeches on religious questions and on social problems, which Mr. M. B. Koḷāskar has compiled in a book that goes by the name of *Religious and Social Reform*, and the collection of his Marāṭhī religious addresses called धर्मपर व्याख्यानें. Also we have his *Rise of the Marāṭhā Power*, and his *Introduction to the Sāṭārā Rājā's and the Peshwā's Diaries*.

I have tried to get my own mental picture of Rāṇaḍe true in its colouring and right in its proportions by talking with people who had some personal contact with him. In this connection I am grateful to Mr. K. Natarājan, Mr. G. K. Devadhar, Sir Lalubhai Sāmaldās, the late Mr. Goculdās Pārekh, Sir Lalubhai Shāh, Sir Hormasjī Wādyā, Captain S. G. Rāṇaḍe, and a few others, for many illuminating side-lights.

In writing the book I have received much helpful counsel from the Rev. Dr. Macnicol, some useful suggestions from Mr. K. T. Paul, the explanation of several matters from Mr. N. R. Phātak, and sundry assistance from my wife. The Rev. B. K. Uzgare and Mrs. Marybai Williams gave me help from time to time with language difficulties, and Mr. C. S. Deoli kindly put at my disposal a complete set of the *Sārvaajanik Sabhā Journal*. To these and to the many other friends whose interest and whose



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ready assistance helped me in my task, I tender warm thanks.

With regard to the treatment of Indian names, it may be well to say for the benefit of readers who are quite unfamiliar with Indian pronunciation, that "Rāṇaḍe" is a three-syllabled word, the vowel in the first syllable sounding like the "a" in *father*, the vowel in the second syllable like the "u" in *but*, and the vowel in the last syllable like the "ai" in *bait*. For the benefit of those who appreciate having the precise Marāṭhī vowels and consonants indicated by the English letters, I have adopted the following system of transliteration in the case of those letters where there is some ambiguity as between the two languages,—  
अ a, आ ā, इ i, ई ī, उ u, ऊ ū, ए e, ऐ ai, ओ o, औ au, ङ ṅ, ट ṭ, ठ ṭh, ड ḍ, ढ ḍh, ण ṇ, त t, थ th, द d, ध dh, न n, य y, र r, ऋ ṛi (or ru), ल l, ळ ḷ, श ś, ष sh, स s.

*Bombay,*  
*July, 1926.*

J. K.



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# I

## CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOLDAYS

**M**AHĀDEV GOVIND RĀNAḌE was born at Niphāḍ, in the Nāsik District, on the 18th of January, 1842. His family belonged to the caste of the Chitpāwan Brāhmans—a section of the community which has given to India a number of remarkable leaders. The family traditions afford a dim glimpse of a far-back ancestor—the great-great-grandfather of the great-great-grandfather of Rānaḍe—leaving his native village in the Ratnāgiri District, on account of economic pressure and family disputes, and migrating to the Deccan, where he settled in the Sholāpūr District. Rānaḍe's great-great-grandmother was a remarkable woman. After having given birth to twenty children, all of whom died in infancy or in youth, she finally had a son, named Bhāskar Appā. He, according to the tradition, would neither have been born, nor, after birth, have survived, had it not been for the severe religious austerities to which his mother had vowed herself, and which she strictly carried out for twelve years. One of the feats she is said to have performed was to walk a hundred thousand times round a cow, feeding it with *jwārī* and herself living on bread made from grains that had passed undigested through the sacred animal. Besides her genuine piety, she was noted for a finely hospitable disposition.

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Bhāskar Appā found employment as a clerk in the offices of the Sānglī State, and afterwards obtained a post in the army. Once, when in command of a detachment, he stormed and captured a Moghul fort, but he refused personally to touch any of the property which was available as spoil. Afterwards he was, for many years, Agent for the Chief of Sānglī at the court of the Peshwās at Poona. He was no time-server, and was esteemed for his straightness and his wisdom. He was deeply religious, and towards the end of his life used to pass nearly all his time in meditation upon God. He died at the age of 95, his teeth and limbs being sound to the end, and his energy so little impaired that up till six months before his death he was able without assistance to mount his horse.

Rānade's grandfather, Amṛutrāo Tātyā, was the eldest son of Bhāskar. He was the same type of strong, well-made man, and was an excellent horseman. He was a great lover of Sanskrit and a close student of the Hindu sacred books—interests which led to his writing a Marāṭhī commentary on the *Purusha Sūkta*.<sup>1</sup> He entered Government service as clerk in a court of justice, and rose to be a *māmlatdār*.<sup>2</sup>

Amṛutrāo Tātyā had four sons, of whom the second, Govindrāo, was Rānade's father. His employment up till the time that Rānade was two and a half years old, was that of Government clerk at Nīphād. Thereafter he served in the Kolhāpūr State, and was promoted to responsible positions. The post of Khāsagī Kārbhārī—a kind of administering private secretary to the ruling Prince—to which

<sup>1</sup> *Rig Veda*, X, 90.

<sup>2</sup> A *māmlatdār* is an official entrusted with certain executive and magisterial functions, and set over one of the District sub-divisions called *Tālukās*.

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he was appointed in 1862; carried with it a salary of Rs. 250 a month—i.e., about £200 a year. When Rāṇaḍe was born, however, his father's salary would only be about Rs. 35 a month, but even then, we are told, the family was, in accordance with the prevalent standard of life, comfortably off, being neither rich nor poor. Govindrāo lived until the year 1877. He was a man of obstinate will, though he had also a kindly side to his disposition. He many a time displayed a prodigal generosity, running himself into debt to assist his brothers and other relatives on occasions when custom required extravagant expenditure, and in order to assist them in education. He was rivetted to Hindu orthodoxy, and genuinely believed and feared the religious sanctions as Hinduism presents them. Rāṇaḍe's filial piety bound him to his father with a strong tie, but it was a tie of respect and duty rather than of congenial affection. Though his father never treated him harshly, there was an awkward stiffness in their relations. Except at meal times, he always stood in his father's presence. When they were alone together Rāṇaḍe would speak as little as possible, and would take himself away as soon as possible. It does not appear that either of his parents markedly influenced the development of his mind and character. But in the story of Rāṇaḍe's life his father looms out of the background like a symbol of hereditary and traditional restraints. The grip of the dead past upon the living and developing present, the shrinking of conservative pietism from the sacrilege of reform, the pain of uncomprehending traditionalism in conflict with *the new*—these seem actually embodied in the gloomy tussles that took place between father and son.

The first recorded words of Rāṇaḍe were spoken in 1845, on the occasion when a very curious accident had befallen him. His mother, Gopikābāī, had set out from Niphāḍ

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along with her infant daughter, Durgā, and her little son. The party went in a bullock-waggon, travelling by night and resting during the heat of the day ; and was escorted by one of Gopikābāī's relatives, who was mounted on horseback, and by a sepoy. It was about two o'clock in the morning, and under the soporific effects of the darkness, the coldness, and the gentle wind, everyone in the waggon fell asleep, the bullocks meanwhile ambling on by themselves. Soon, however, the road took a steep dip which caused the animals to break into a run. Mahādev had in his sleep rolled to the edge of the waggon, and the sudden jerk that occurred when the bullocks started to run, made him fall out on to the road. His mother being in a deep sleep did not waken, and while the change in the bullocks' pace aroused driver and sepoy, the rattling and rumbling of the waggon prevented them from noticing that any mishap had occurred. So the vehicle went on for about a mile and a half. It was not until the child had been lying on the road, alone in the darkness, for nearly a quarter of an hour that the horseman reached the place where he lay. Hearing the sound of the horse's hoofs, Mahādev called out, "Uncle Viṭhū, here I am fallen out." The uncle's surprise and alarm can be imagined ! He speedily lifted the child, and urging his horse forward soon drew level with the waggon. When he called to Gopikābāī, "Are you awake ? Are the children in their places all right ?" she sleepily murmured that everything was all right. Thereupon Viṭhū shouted, "You are still asleep, look if the children are beside you." She then began to grope round the waggon with her hands, and soon realised that Mahādev was missing. Viṭhū however at once removed the dread which fell upon her and which made her cry out with fear ; and as he placed the child safely in the waggon again, he



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said, "What a great mercy God has shown to us this day."

Rāṇaḍe's childhood from the age of three to the age of thirteen was spent at Kolhāpūr. When he was six years old he was sent to the Marāṭhī school there, and in 1851 he was sent to the Kolhāpūr English School. He used afterwards to speak very highly of the English teaching he had received from the headmaster of the English School, Mr. Kṛishṇarāo Chāphāji. It is curious to find that both Rāṇaḍe's parents and his teachers regarded him as being in no way a specially promising boy. Indeed he seemed to be rather dull and backward. Until quite a big boy he was unable to articulate certain letters of the alphabet. He would persistently substitute the "T" class of letters for the "K" class. His mother used to be quite concerned about him, and would exclaim, "What *is* to become of Mahādev? Will he ever be clever enough to earn ten rupees for his wife?" As a boy he was rather clumsy and ungainly—and his college nick-name, "the baby elephant," shows that further development did not alter this characteristic. But he inherited the "Rāṇaḍe" constitution, and was very robust in body.

From his early days he displayed a calmness and steadiness of balance that prevented him from being exhilarated, excited, or upset by happenings which are usually reacted to in a disturbed manner. For example, he would keep to himself news which most children would be bursting to tell. It would not enter into his head to announce to his parents that he had passed in the school examination. The children of the neighbours would come home, telling of their passing, retailing all that the examiner had asked and what they had answered, but Mahādev would be quite silent about it all. When his mother learned from the

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other children that Mahādev had passed, she would say to him, "Why ever did you not tell us?" And he would calmly reply, "What is there to talk about in that? If we go to school every day and do our work, then we are bound to pass. What more is there in it?"

Another characteristic which reminds us that the child is father of the man, was the boy's absorption in the interests of his work. When he was learning his letters, he would come home after the school was dismissed, and would sit for the rest of the day repeating the letters over slowly to himself and drawing them on the wall with his finger. His work and his recreation tended to be identical. When playing alone in the street, he would sit on the ground drawing arithmetic tables in the dust.

From his early years Rāṇaḍe had a keen sense of right and wrong. Certain incidents, in which his conduct was guided by a delicate sense of honour, remind us strongly of the lines of Robert Burns<sup>1</sup>,—

"Where'er ye feel your honour grip,  
Let that aye be your border."

Once his mother put into his hands a large piece and a small piece of a cake of which he was very fond, indicating at the same time that one bit was to be given to a poor peasant boy who was standing near. She was surprised to see Mahādev hand the large piece to the other boy, and said, "I meant you to give him the small bit and keep the large one for yourself." But Mahādev answered that that was not what she had said, and that he had done what he understood was her wish.

As a boy he was very fond of the game called *songṭyā*—a game in which dice are flung and pieces moved in accordance with the result of the throws. On one occasion, in his

<sup>1</sup> In the poem entitled, "Advice to a Young Friend."

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tenth year, lacking any one to play with, he sat down in front of one of the verandah pillars and, imagining it to be his opponent, started a game. Playing with his right hand for the pillar and with his left for himself, he carried the game through to the end. The victory fell to the pillar. When chaffed about allowing a human being to be defeated by a wooden post, he quietly replied that a fact is a fact, that the pillar had obtained a more advantageous throw of the dice, and that there was surely no disgrace in that. The answer, if it does not foreshadow much promise of humour, yet reveals an innate sense of rectitude, a recognition that facts must guide, and that matters are not to be arranged simply in accordance with our whims.

Mahādev used to treat with scanty respect the ornaments in which his mother loved to see him decked. With considerable sacrifice, for she was not rich, she would put a necklet, a bracelet, and a ring on him. But Mahādev would so arrange his *dhota* that it covered the gold necklet. The bracelet he would move up to the top of his arm so that it was hidden by his sleeve. And he would turn the ring round on his finger and close his fist on it, so that it was as little visible as possible. One of his relatives once asked him indignantly why he did not wear the ornaments properly, seeing that his mother was so anxious to have him nicely bedecked. His reply was to compare himself with the poor Brāhman students<sup>1</sup> who came to the house every day, and to ask why he should wear ornaments when they did not.

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with what is known as the *Māhdukarī* system poor scholars went every morning from house to house of the Brāhman community, getting a little cooked food from each, and so securing enough to provide them with two meals.

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The year 1854, when Mahādev was twelve, was a year of bereavement and of marriage in the Rāṇaḍe household. In that year his mother died, in giving birth to her eighth child—none of the eight surviving beyond infancy except Mahādev and Durgā. His father married again within about sixteen days. A few days after that event the marriages of Mahādev and of his sister took place. Mahādev's bride was Sakhūbāī, a daughter of Moropant Dāṇḍekar of Wāī, and her age at the time of the marriage would be nine years.

By 1856 Rāṇaḍe had gone as far as the school at Kolhāpūr could carry him, and so in accordance with his father's desire of giving him a complete English course, and at his own urgent request, he was sent to Bombay, and enrolled in the Elphinstone High School, a Government institution. It was at this stage that Rāṇaḍe's quality of mind first began to be noticed. His headmaster, on several occasions, indicated that he was a very exceptional lad and prophesied that he would become a famous man. He spent three years at the school, obtaining scholarships of ten, fifteen, and twenty rupees a month, in each successive year.

## II

### COLLEGE YEARS AS STUDENT AND AS TEACHER

**I**N 1859 Rāṇaḍe was one of the twenty-one students who passed the first matriculation examination held by the Bombay University. On the results of that examination he was appointed to a junior scholarship of Rs. 70 a month for three years, and in 1861 obtained a senior scholarship of Rs. 120 a month for three years. In April, 1862, he passed his B.A. examination in the first class. At that time the honours examination and the ordinary pass examination were quite separate. For the honours examination the University prescribed only the subjects, and the student had to prepare himself by reading what books he could obtain that were relevant. Rāṇaḍe read widely but secured only a second class in the honours examination. The examiner, however, was so much impressed by the intelligence and learning revealed in Rāṇaḍe's papers that he collected a sum of money among his friends and used it to present him with a gold medal and Rs. 200 worth of books.

From the year 1861 Rāṇaḍe was on the junior staff of the Elphinstone Institution and had a considerable amount of teaching to do. In 1862 he was appointed English editor of the *Indu Prakāsh*, an English-Marāṭhī weekly, founded in that same year by G. H. Deshmukh, to advocate political advance, social reform, and material

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progress. Without neglecting his studies he, for four months,<sup>1</sup> carried on this editorial work, and gave great satisfaction in the doing of it. In 1864, Rāṇaḍe was granted the M.A. degree, obtaining it automatically in accordance with the five years' regulation. In 1865, he was made a Fellow of the Bombay University and was, indeed, the first indigenous Fellow to belong to that body. He commenced to study Law after taking his B.A. degree, attending law classes four times a week. In 1866, having passed the two examinations, he graduated LL.B. with first class honours.

Rāṇaḍe was a student of exceptional quality. One of his professors once said, "Mr. Rāṇaḍe is the only student in the College who can think." His industry was prodigious, as can be seen from the lists of the books he read, the summaries he made, and the essays he wrote. Like so many other men who have made their mark in life, he was endowed with a very retentive memory. It was said of him that after reading a book he was able with ease to write out the best part of its contents.

Sir D. E. Wacha, a junior contemporary at the Elphinstone Institution, speaking at a meeting of Elphinstonians, drew the following interesting picture of Rāṇaḍe as he remembered often seeing him in the College library:

"Listless of all that was going on around him, we would find him either intently absorbed in writing his weekly essay or reading aloud his Grote and Gibbon, his Hume and Macaulay, his Locke and Hamilton, and the rest of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Māṅkar gives the period of Rāṇaḍe's editorship as three or four years. But the quotation given by Mr. Phāṭak (See न्यायमूर्ति रानडे footnote to p. 135) from Rāṇaḍe's 1862-63 Report as College Fellow seems to show that he occupied the editorial chair only from November, 1862 till March, 1863.



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standard authors which to us freshmen were such a terrible bugbear to master. The principals and professors, Dr. Harkness and Sir Alexander Grant, Professors Hughlings and Sinclair considered him as one who was destined to make his mark in the public life of this great city and achieve the highest distinction.”<sup>1</sup>

For his teachers Rāṇaḍe cherished a warm admiration, and especially for Sir Alexander Grant. Sir Alexander, on his side, had a lively appreciation of Rāṇaḍe's qualities. That, however, did not prevent him from making his pupil feel the weight of a stern discipline when he thought he needed it. Like most high-spirited young men, Rāṇaḍe in his student days was fervently patriotic but, perhaps, not always careful to preserve a due proportion in criticism and attack. It is told of him that on one occasion he drew a very disparaging comparison between British rule and Marāṭhā rule. Sir Alexander sent for him and, after controverting the views expressed by Rāṇaḍe, said, “Young man, you should not run down a Government which is educating you and doing so much for your people.” Besides that, he punished Rāṇaḍe by suspending his scholarship for six months.

Rāṇaḍe was by this time thoroughly at home in the English language. Mr. Howard, the then Director of Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, once sent a number of his essays to England as specimens of the excellent English written by a native of India. Rāṇaḍe is also said to have written some very respectable verses while at College. But a much deeper thing than the attainment of facility in the use of a foreign language had been happening to Rāṇaḍe. His English education had given him the key of entry into a new world of ideas. The Western mind has

<sup>1</sup> Reported in *The Times of India*, 2nd February, 1901.

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its roots in the Renaissance, in the Reformation, in the political philosophers, and in modern science. The Hindu mind has its roots in the Vedas, the *Upanishads*, the *Purāṇās*, and the *Bhakti* Cults. The two mentalities differ enormously both in their outlook and in their atmosphere. The falling of the seed of Western education upon a mind nurtured in the Hindu tradition, and at the same time so able and so assimilative as Rāṇaḍe's was, could not fail to be a momentous event. Rāṇaḍe's English education was, without a doubt, the most formative influence upon his life and career ; and being the man he was his reaction to that influence had effects which travelled far beyond himself.

In a lecture which he delivered long after his student days (in August, 1878) Rāṇaḍe uttered words that show how keen was his appreciation of the values which Western education can impart to the Oriental world. He set himself to answer the question, What advantage is there in knowing the English language ? And he answers :

"No one can understand its advantage by mere telling, and indeed it is not possible merely to tell it. It is necessary to study the language and the knowledge, for only from the basis of experience can the advantage be really appreciated. The English language is to be regarded not as simply an English affair, but rather an affair of all the advanced nations of the West. If it be asserted that there is no need to go to a foreign language, for surely India has its own language and learning, then the answer is that the Indian learning even in its most flourishing period has to be pronounced immature, whereas to-day European knowledge has advanced to a mature stage. The important thing about any body of knowledge is that it should tell us what we are, what our duty is, what we are to do in this world, what our rights are, and such like matters. This is the knowledge we ought to seek after, no matter whether it originated in our own country, or



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in a foreign country. Now that knowledge has been more or less discovered by the European learning, whereas even in the flourishing times of our Indian learning there is no trace of it. . . . The English rule should be regarded as a fortunate occurrence for India, and not as a reason for refusing the proffered knowledge. Japan and China and other nations seek with great expenditure and labour to acquire this knowledge. . . . India is in a fortunate position as compared with the Chinese and Japanese, since she is so favourably situated for acquiring it without difficulty. Instead of decrying the impact upon India of Western thought the true lover of India will rejoice in it. He will himself acquire as much of it as he can, will get acquainted with his rights, and by means of the modern knowledge will remove the cloud that has enveloped his country for thousands of years.”<sup>1</sup>

The extraordinary amount of reading that Rāṇaḍe did, had a serious effect upon his already defective eyesight, and for some time it was feared that he would go blind. The trouble began in 1863. In 1864 the doctor gave him strict injunctions that he was not to use his eyes at all. Every morning one or other of his friends used to lead him to the doctor's house, where the green bandages that covered his eyes were removed, the eyes cleaned, fresh ointment applied, and the bandages put on again. This state of affairs lasted for six months, and one can imagine what an exasperating disability it must have been to Rāṇaḍe with his insatiable appetite for reading. However, the burden of his affliction was lightened by the good-heartedness of fellow-students, some of whom used to take turns in reading to him, and so he was able to keep up his studies. Rāṇaḍe seems to have had what psychologists call the “aural” type of memory, for it is said that

<sup>1</sup> The lecture, which was in Marāṭhī, is given in full in Phāṭak's न्यायमूर्ति रानडे pp. 302-5.

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he did not grasp the meaning of sentences without either himself uttering the words aloud or hearing someone else utter them. Probably that fact, combined with his exceptional strength of memory, made it more possible for him to continue his studies during his blind period than would have been the case, had he been a "visual" memoriser. It must, however, have been for him a very trying period, and he had trouble with his eyes more or less until the end of his life.

Rāṇaḍe had in him the making of a great professor, and it was along the teaching line that he started out in life, though he was soon diverted into a legal career. He began teaching when he was appointed a Fellow in the Elphinstone College, in 1861. He taught history, geography, arithmetic, economics, logic, English composition, and English poetry to the lower classes in the Elphinstone Institution. We are told that he made the study of geography attractive by connecting it closely with history. In dealing with a particular country he would tell the story of some of its great men, and would impart the geographical knowledge in connection therewith.

In 1864 he started teaching economics—the subject which shared with history his chief liking. The high-priest of economic orthodoxy at that time was John Stuart Mill. Rāṇaḍe, though never an extreme rebel, yet showed sufficient independence of mind to criticise Mill and to protest against the blind application to Indian affairs of the Millian doctrines, which had been evolved amid conditions of economic life differing radically from those of India. We shall see, later on, the form which this protest took in Rāṇaḍe's more mature thought. The students were accustomed to confine themselves almost exclusively to Mill's book, but Rāṇaḍe, never content

## College Years as Student and as Teacher

with a one-book knowledge of a subject, made them read Senior, M'Culloch, Ramsay, Malthus, and Bastiat. In his lectures, having given the gist of these writers, he used at the end of the course to read Mill's book with the class.

Being himself the sort of man who would read everything that he could find bearing upon the subject he was studying, Rāṇaḍe had no patience with the *cramming* methods of the average student. He considered that a teacher's function is to teach his class the subject and not merely to prepare them for passing an examination. He knew it was possible to pass an examination by means of cram-books, and yet at the end of it all to be destitute of any intelligent grasp of the subject. His own method of study had been very different from the pass-tabloid method that was, and is, so common. "Up till the time of the examination," Mr. Phāṭak tells us, "the books set by the University would scarcely be seen in his hands. His method of study was to read first the biggest books on economics and history and logic, and digest thoroughly the useful part of them, and then at the end to run over the set books."<sup>1</sup> And similarly in his teaching preparation there was nothing of the "ca-canny" policy. He brought to his classes the wealth that he had culled from wide and varied sources. The mental digestion of the majority of his students was, however, too weak for the rich fare he offered; and we are told that he felt the results of his preparation and teaching to be like the effect made by pouring water on a vessel that is turned upside down. One feels, however, that Rāṇaḍe must have been a force making for academic righteousness, and that

<sup>1</sup> न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 59.

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to the few real students the stimulus of a teacher of such calibre must have been powerful.

In 1862, just after he had passed the B.A., Rāṇaḍe was appointed Examiner in the Marāṭhī Language for the Matriculation Examination. He performed the duties of the post with much conscientiousness. "To carry out the responsibility that lay on me as an examiner," he wrote in his report, "I read six chapters of Dnyāneshwar, perused several parts of *Navanīt*, and studied poems of Moropant. It was necessary to get a knowledge of the minutest details of the set course of study, so as to be able to set the questions properly. I spent most of my leisure time in February and March in this work."<sup>1</sup>

In 1866, Rāṇaḍe was appointed Oriental Translator to the Government of Bombay—his work being to report to the Government on whatever new literature was published in Marāṭhī. This appointment caused him to give up teaching for a time and to go and settle in Poona. Shortly after, he was made *Kārbhāri* or Administrator of the State of Akāḷkoṭ, and he went from there to be Judge in the State of Kolhāpūr in September, 1867. He acted as Oriental Translator for nearly two years, retaining the position while employed at Akāḷkoṭ and Kolhāpūr. The books and pamphlets were sent to him at these places, and after perusal he sent his report on them to the Director of the Legal Department.

In March, 1868, Rāṇaḍe returned to Bombay, having been appointed Professor at the Elphinstone College in the subjects of English and History. At the time of his coming his pupils, his old fellow-students, and his colleagues on the staff held a great gathering in his honour and presented

<sup>1</sup> Phāṭak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 62.

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him with a gold watch. For the next two and a half years, besides doing his College work, he at different times acted temporarily in the offices of Judge of the Small Causes Court, Police Magistrate, High Court Deputy, and Assistant Registrar at the High Court. In 1871, he passed the Advocates Examination, and shortly afterwards he was appointed a judge by the Government of Bombay, and was sent to take up duty at Poona.

### III

## RESPONSE TO THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

RĀNADE was essentially a son of his age. He built his inner life out of the deeper urges and the finer aspirations of his time. When he went up to college, ideas of social reform were in the air. Western education, the British administration of law and justice, and the efforts of the Christian missionaries had brought into Hindu society a ferment of new thought. As a result the better mind of Hinduism was becoming acutely uncomfortable regarding such things as child-marriage, the wrongs suffered by widows, and the injustice done to the depressed classes; it was beginning to regret the illiteracy among men, and to doubt the wisdom of opposing the education of women; it was beginning to realize some of the drawbacks of the caste system, and to chafe at the ban on foreign travel. There was in these days, too, a stirring of the waters in the religious sphere. It was seen in the turning to Christianity of such men as Nārāyaṇ Śeṣhādrī and Bābā Padmanjī, and in reform movements within Hinduism. There was an interesting society in existence for two or three years after Rānade came to Bombay. It had been founded in 1840 by Dādobā Pāṇḍurang and was called the *Paramhans Maṇḍalī*.<sup>1</sup> The objects of this

<sup>1</sup> The Divine Society—*Paramhans* being a designation for the Supreme Deity.



## Response to the Spirit of the Age

society were the abolition of caste, the introduction of the custom of widow-marriage, and the renunciation of idolatry. Every meeting was opened and closed with prayer. There was to be absolute secrecy regarding the objects of the society until its membership reached a thousand, when public profession of the creed was to be made.<sup>1</sup> The Theistic Church known as the *Prārthanā Samāj*, i.e., the Prayer Society, can be said to have arisen from the ashes of the Paramhans Maṇḍalī.

The impetus of Western life and thought was conveyed into the heart of India's social and religious system largely through the writings and the agitations of Rām Mohan Roy—the great Bengal reformer and founder of the Brāhmo Samāj. Rāṇaḍe regarded Rām Mohan Roy as one who had turned the flow of the national current in the right direction, by his long fight for the abolition of *sati*<sup>2</sup> and other religious atrocities, and by his endeavour to remove the false accretions of ages and to return to the pure monotheism of Vedic times. He also saw in Rām Mohan Roy one who was a true patriot “long before our era of Congress meetings and conferences.” Rām Mohan Roy died nine years before Rāṇaḍe was born. But as a young man in Bombay, Rāṇaḍe came into contact with many older men whose minds had absorbed, and whose actions embodied, something of that same reforming spirit that had found so distinguished an exponent in Rām Mohan Roy. Rāṇaḍe was in touch, for example, in the persons of Dādobā Pāṇḍurang and Bālśāstrī Jāmbhekar with men who were full of zeal for the advancement of education both among boys and

<sup>1</sup> See Bābā Padmanjī's *Once Hindu: Now Christian*, Chapter xi, for an account of this remarkable Society.

<sup>2</sup> The practice of widows allowing themselves—often under heavy social pressure—to be burnt alive at the time of their husband's funeral.

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girls. In Nānā Śankarṣeṭ he had before his eyes a beloved popular leader who had striven to remove misunderstandings regarding the Government action against satī, who had supported the agitation against indecencies at the *Holi* festival, who had worked hard for the increase of English education among Indians, and who was a model of enlightened citizenship. In Viṣṇuśāstrī Paṇḍit he had come into close contact with a man who was carrying on in Western India the great work on behalf of Hindu widows which Vidyāsāgar had started in Bengal. In Dr. Bhāu Dāji and others he came under the influence of enthusiastic students of history who were ever seeking to point the contrast between India's ancient glory and her present fallen state. Dādā-bhāi Naorojī was in England during Rāṇaḍe's student days, but doubtless Rāṇaḍe often heard and read about the things which that great political pioneer was doing and saying. In connection with the religious quest he must on several occasions have listened to the fiery eloquence of Keśab Chandra Sen. Such men as these were the channels through which the spirit of the times poured in on Rāṇaḍe's soul. But he absorbed that stream in such a way that it became in him a deep and living spring.

Rāṇaḍe was just the type of young man in whom the higher urges of the time-spirit would find a welcome, and we see him in his student days eagerly responding to its imperious summons. A society called the Dnyānprasārak Sabhā, i.e., the Society for the Spreading of Knowledge, was flourishing when he came to college. He became a member and read some papers before it—"The Duties of Educated Young Men," in 1859; "Marāṭhā Kings and Nobles," in 1860; and "The Evil Results of the Growth of Population," in 1864. When editor of the English columns of the *Indu Prakāśh*, he boldly upheld the cause



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of the Indian widow. Moreover, he was a member of the Widow-Marriage Association, which had been founded in 1866. He was of great assistance to Vishṇuśāstrī Paṇḍit, at the time of his unequal fight with the orthodox Śāstris, when trying to prove that widow-marriages are not in conflict with the Hindu scriptures. The Association brought about a great many re-marriages of widows among the Deccani and Gujarātī Brāhmins. At the time of the first of these re-marriages—in 1869—Vishṇuśāstrī Paṇḍit, Rāṇaḍe, and five other leading members of the Association were publicly excommunicated by the Śankarāchāryā of Western India.<sup>1</sup> One or two of the excommunicated men gave in and appeased the authorities, but Rāṇaḍe, refusing to lower the flag of reform, went on fearlessly with the work of encouraging the widow-marriages. It is true that he had not much to suffer on account of his excommunication—a fact which was due partly to his position, and partly to the circumstance that many of his friends were persons of liberal ideas. Nevertheless, his firm stand would be a powerful help to the cause.

Like R. G. Bhandārkar and V. A. Moḍak and many other young men of his time, Rāṇaḍe longed for a form of religion which would satisfy his mind and heart, and which at the same time would not require a complete break with the Hinduism of his fathers. He found this in the Prārthanā Samāj, which was inaugurated in March, 1867, amid the wave of religious enthusiasm that marked the second visit to Bombay of the Brāhmo Samāj<sup>2</sup> missionary,

<sup>1</sup> One of several religious dignitaries whose position in regard to their own particular area corresponds to that of a Pope.

<sup>2</sup> This "elder sister" of the Prārthanā Samāj was founded in 1828 by Rām Mohan Roy and, though never large in numbers, it has exercised an important influence in Bengal.

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Keśab Chandra Sen. From the beginning, Rāṇaḍe had close connection with this new theistic society, and indeed, as we shall see, he took a large part in the forming of its creed.

A child of the East, Rāṇaḍe might be said to have become a foster-child of the West, though he never forgot his real parentage. He comes upon the scene at a time which, spiritually, politically and socially, can be called a twilight hour—but it is a twilight touched with the glimmerings of dawn. Western thought was streaking with its rich-toned colours the sky of the ancient Eastern civilization. Through his Western education Rāṇaḍe passed without crisis and without conflict into the new outlook, and became a robust and optimistic herald of the new day. Already, while still a student, his eager spirit was reconnoitring those paths of political, social, economic, and religious progress along which he was, all his life, to be so persistent a striver.

From the close of his college period onwards to the very day of his death we are conscious that Rāṇaḍe has engaged his powers in the service of an ideal which goes far beyond the attainment of personal ambition, and which sheds a brighter lustre than the individual success of a distinguished legal career. We see him now going forward to the work to which he has been called, a man of rare mental endowment, burning with a strong and steady flame of patriotism. We see him pursuing, with an exceptional catholicity of interest and wholeness of view, four great lines of combined mental research and practical effort, seeking to forward the social, political, economic, and religious advance of his motherland. It is as though, up till 1871, Rāṇaḍe had been serving his apprenticeship; after that he had emerged, the master craftsman, to wield

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his tools in the shaping of his country's future. As these interests of reform dominate Rāṇaḍe's life with clear insistence from now onwards, so the remainder of this biography will be concerned mainly with the leading thoughts that Rāṇaḍe reached and maintained in the social, political, economic, and religious fields, and with the efforts that he made to bring into effective operation the practical conclusions of his thinking. The main incidents of his life, its times of unwonted stress and dramatic tension, were but the inevitable domestic and official frictions that attended upon a man whom such a quality of patriotism inspired, and who was seeking for his country a pathway from the old to the new, from the valued past to the beckoning future. In the varying occasions and forms of that friction and in the ways in which it was faced, we shall see the character of the man revealed.

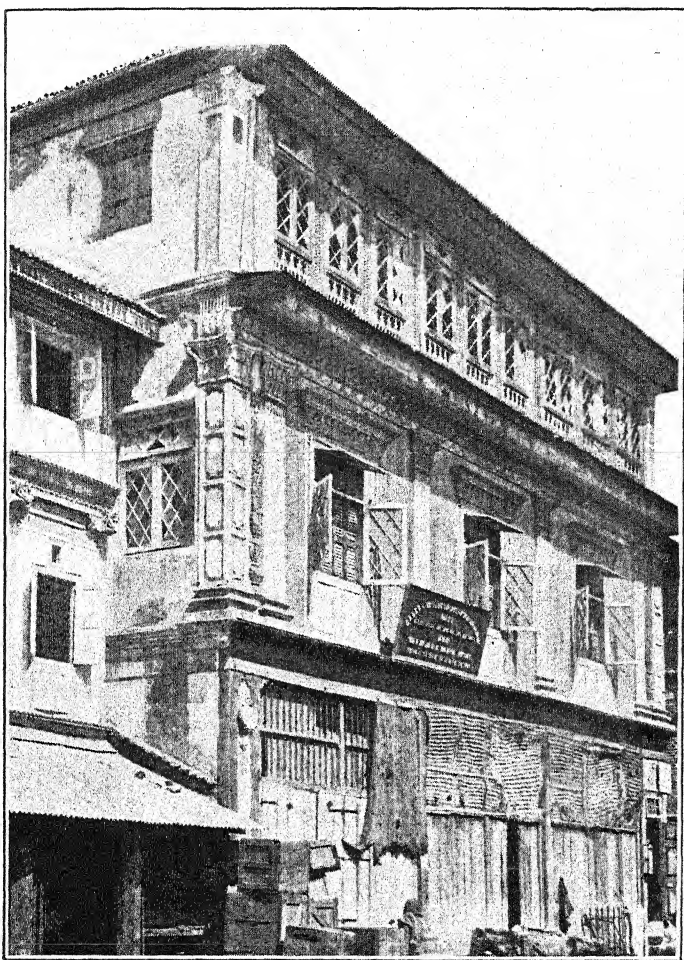
## IV

### THE SĀRVAJANIK SABHĀ

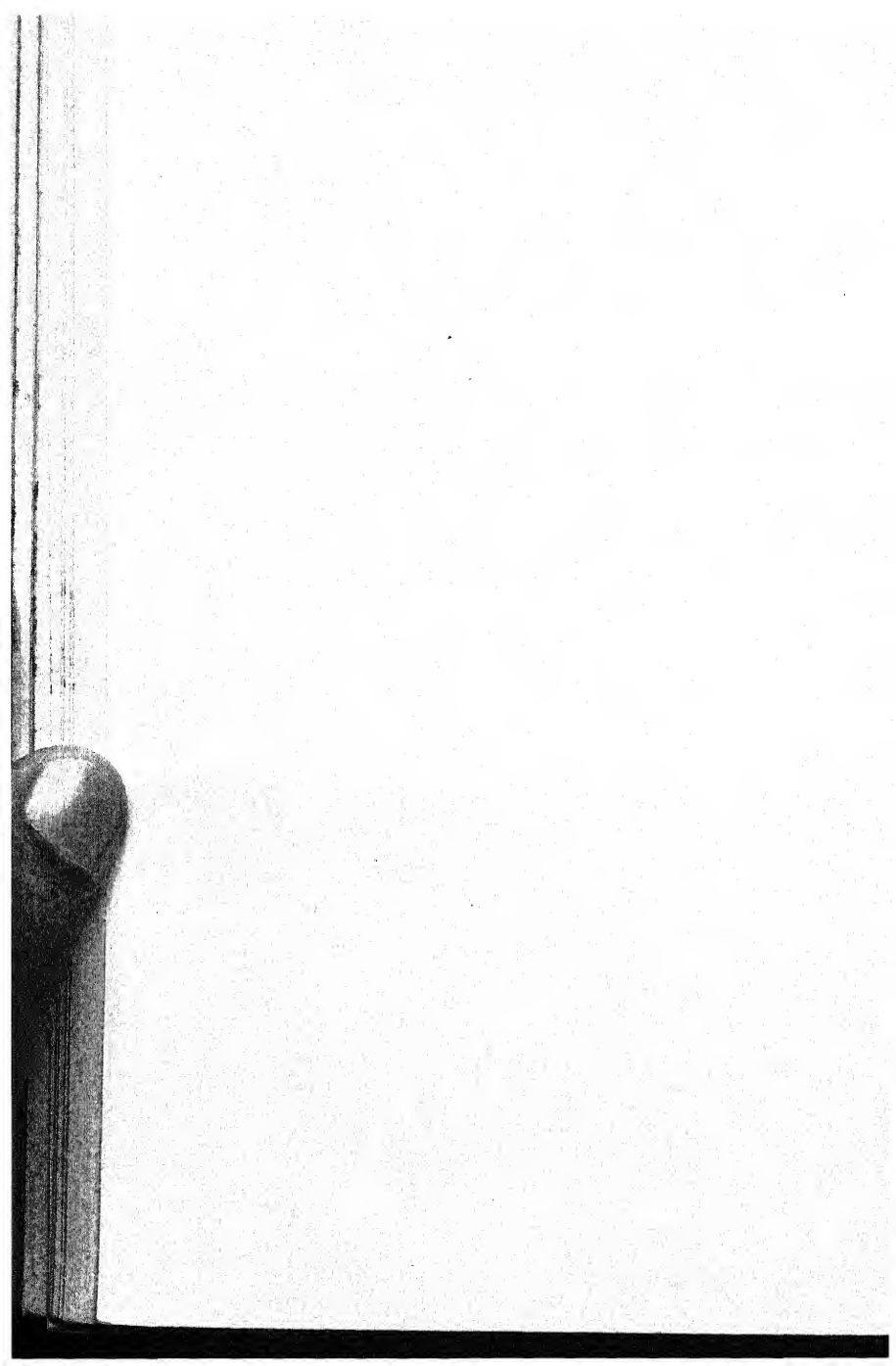
#### IMPACT UPON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

IT was as First Class First Grade Subordinate Judge that Rāṇaḍe came to Poona in November, 1871. The post carried with it a salary of Rs. 800 a month. It was only an *acting* appointment at first, but he was confirmed in the position in 1873. Excepting one, it was the highest office to which a subordinate judge could ordinarily attain, but he was appointed to it at the very outset of his legal career and when he was not yet thirty years old. His jurisdiction in this office extended over all civil suits, of whatever value, and against all persons except the Government. The Government showed its confidence in him by giving him authority to hear appeals from the decrees of the second class subordinate judges—and he was probably the first subordinate judge to be invested with appellate powers. Mr. Mānkar, himself once a sub-judge, says of him,—“His judgments, remarkable for patient and minute inquiry, exhaustive treatment of every case that came before him, careful examination of every document filed in it, lucid statements of facts, just appreciation of evidences, elaborate expositions of the various bearings of the question at issue, and cogency of arguments adduced in support of the decisions finally arrived at, often won the admiration of the High Court.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mānkar, *Sketch of Rāṇaḍe's Life and Works*, p 44.



THE SĀRVAJANIK SABHĀ BUILDING AT POONA



## The Sarvajanik Sabha

When Rāṇaḍe came to Poona, he found that there had been inaugurated there in the previous year a society called the Sārvaajanik Sabhā. The object of the society was to represent to Government the needs and the wishes of the people, and its membership included a large number of persons of position and influence—landed-proprietors, bankers, merchants, retired Government servants, lawyers, professors, and most of the ruling chiefs of the Southern Marāṭhā country. Rāṇaḍe found in this society a means of expression for that social conscience which burned within him, and a good instrument for furthering his purposes. He became a member immediately after his arrival in Poona, gathered the reins of its affairs into his own hands, and for the following twenty-two years was the life and soul of it. The original founder of the Sabhā was Gaṇesh Wāsudev Joshī—affectionately called “Uncle Sārvaajanik”—and he and Rāṇaḍe worked hand in hand, Joshī being the executive power in the society and Rāṇaḍe the brains. The Sabhā played a very important part in the awakening of Western India, and in creating a public opinion upon political, social, and economic matters.

Gladstone, in 1871, appointed a Parliamentary Committee which inquired into Indian finance.<sup>1</sup> In the following year the Sārvaajanik Sabhā, with a view to obtaining a report that would be supplementary and perhaps corrective of that of the Parliamentary Committee, resolved that it would on its own account make an investigation of the material conditions of the whole of the Mahārāshṭra<sup>2</sup> district.

<sup>1</sup> Known to history as the Fawcett Committee. Dādābhāi Naoroji gave evidence before it, endeavouring to demonstrate the great poverty of India and the very high incidence of taxation.

<sup>2</sup> Mahārāshṭra is the name given to an area of 100,000 square miles, stretching inland from the middle portion of the west coast of



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This report was published in 1873 in the form of a small book. As Mr. Phatak points out, Rāṇaḍe, by arranging for the investigation and by writing the report, taught his countrymen an important lesson, showing them how to diagnose their own troubles in an independent manner, and how to make suggestions for remedy, instead of waiting idly and obsequiously for Government to do everything. The report laid the blame for the distress existing in the Ahmednagar and Sholāpūr districts at the door of the land policy, and as a result the Government henceforward took a keen and not always favourable interest in the Sabhā's activities.

It may be noticed in passing that the Parliamentary Committee lasted for four years and came to an end with the fall of Gladstone's Cabinet. Rāṇaḍe accomplished the formidable task of making an epitome of the 3,500 pages of its four-volume report. His epitome after being revised and supplemented was published in 1877, under the title of *A Revenue Manual of the British Empire in India*. Rāṇaḍe had been invited to go to England to give evidence, but the abrupt ending of the Committee prevented his visit from taking place.

In 1874, Rāṇaḍe, through the Sabhā, sent to Parliament and to the chief Government officials and to the newspapers copies of a petition regarding Responsible Self-Government. The petition proposed that India should have representatives in the Parliament at London and that Indian questions

India. It is roughly triangular in form—the sides of the triangle being (1) the coast-line from Daman to Kārwar, (2) a line running from Daman to a point somewhat eastward of Nāgpūr, (3) a line running from that point beyond Nāgpūr to Kārwar. The population of the area is about 30 millions. (See M. G. Rāṇaḍe's *Rise of the Marāṭhā Power*, pp. 19-20).



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should be settled with their consent. The number of representatives was to be eleven, and everyone who paid at least fifty rupees in taxes was to have the right of voting in the election of the representatives. To show that popular opinion favoured the demand, he secured thousands of signatures from among the people. Rāṇaḍe of course was not so simple as to imagine that Government would at once grant the demand. To his mind the chief value of such efforts consisted in the fact that they were first steps in the people's political education. The general condition of the country was one of political slumber, with here and there a few minds beginning to be awake. Rāṇaḍe's aim was to get the ideas of self-government underlying his petition considered and discussed, so that the ferment of national aspiration might enter into the dull mass of the people's life.

An outbreak of mob violence accompanied with burnings and robberies which became known as the Deccan Riots, occurred in June, 1875. The victims of the attacks were chiefly the *sāvkhārs* (i.e., the village money-lenders), and the general opinion was that the motive was to destroy the *sāvkhārs*' debt-records and to take revenge on them for their cruel and heartless treatment. The Government apparently lent its countenance to the idea that the bad conduct of the *sāvkhārs* was responsible for the outbreak. But Rāṇaḍe and other members of the Sabhā felt convinced that the real root of the trouble was the Government's system of land-taxation. The other leaders of the Sabhā wanted to make this opinion known to Government, but Rāṇaḍe counselled caution. He reminded his friends that they were in the Government's bad books, on account of the attitude the Sabhā had adopted towards a recent affair which had ended with the deposition of the Gaikwad of

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Baroda. He pointed out that if, while the disturbance was in process, they exonerated the sāvkārs and blamed the Government's land-policy, the Sabhā might be suppressed and all its potential usefulness destroyed. In accordance with this advice, the Sabhā waited until after the trouble had died down, before sending its representation to Government.

Being now thoroughly suspicious of the Sabhā, Government took steps to discover who exactly were its leaders and what their real intentions were. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe recounts a rather amusing affair,<sup>1</sup> in which her husband brought about the discomfiture of a secret agent who was sent to Poona to investigate.

He was a Bengali gentleman, and when he came to Poona he endeavoured to make himself popular by keeping open house. The secretary of the Sabhā was among the many people who were attracted to the company of this stranger of the cultured mind and winning manners, and who flocked to enjoy his abundant hospitality. But Rāṇaḍe, suspecting that the man was a spy, arranged to have his movements watched. It was then discovered that the stranger's letters were not delivered by the postman, but that he called every morning at the general post-office himself. It was also established that his correspondence seemed to be chiefly carried on with a Government secretary at Calcutta or at Simla. These facts began to be whispered abroad, and the number of persons frequenting the hospitable house began to diminish. The stranger evidently guessed that his purpose was discovered, for one day, not long after, the Poona folk found that he had disappeared, leaving no trace behind him.

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. Rāṇaḍe's आठवणी pp. 64-66.

## The Sārvaṇik Sabhā

In connection with the great Delhi Durbar of 1877, a meeting of Poona citizens was held under the auspices of the Sārvaṇik Sabhā, and a loyal address, the draft of which had been prepared by Rāṇaḍe, was sent up from it to the Queen's Government. The address besides assurances of loyalty and expressions of consideration for the Queen's health and prosperity, contained some complaints and requests—and to these latter some of the Anglo-Indian newspapers took strong exception. Rāṇaḍe's answer was that the British Government ought to follow the immemorial custom of Indian rulers and grant some striking boon at times of great rejoicing. He urged that the great occasion of the Queen's assumption of the new title of *Empress of India* should be marked by the gift of responsible self-government. He followed this up by an impressive statement of the fact, which his great contemporary, Sir Pherozezshāh Mehtā, also used often to dwell on, namely, the impossibility of Europeans entering into the Indian mind as Indians themselves can. He further pointed out that though the Muslim emperors were tyrannical and despotic, they yet understood a very important principle of Imperial rule, and that was the trusting of the native princes, and the giving to them of responsibilities in war and in peace. He desired the formation of a Council of Representatives and a Chamber of Princes, believing that in these institutions both princes and people would find a unity of aim, their outlook would be broadened, and their minds sharpened. "Uncle Sārvaṇik" carried these aims to more concrete expression by sending an open letter on the subject to the princes, and by meeting with many of them at the Delhi Durbar, and so trying to awaken them to a knowledge of their duty.

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The year 1877 was one of dreadful famine in the Deccan and thousands of peasant folk were at the doors of death. Rāṇaḍe was deeply moved by the state of affairs, and working through the Sārva-janik Sabhā he was able to render very valuable service in the catastrophe. What the Sabhā did was to organise and to carry on an intelligence service in the famine areas. It sent representatives to make inquiries on the spot. These men were able as a rule to get close to the people and to elicit the real facts, interrogating the *kulḥkarnī*,<sup>1</sup> the postmaster, the school-master, and other such persons of the villages. Their reports were sent up to the Secretary of the Sabhā. The work of selecting the Sabhā's famine-inquiry agents and of allotting them their spheres of labour was entrusted to Rāṇaḍe. On the basis of the agents' reports, he wrote papers giving detailed information regarding the famine conditions, and these were regularly forwarded to Government over the signature of the Sabhā's secretary. His papers also reviewed the Government's famine activities, and were frank in criticism as well as generous in praise. The inquiry work raised the Sabhā greatly in the estimation of Government, and many Government officials highly commended its efforts. But, later on, the Sabhā again fell into disfavour, in connection with a strike of people employed on relief work, which it was suspected of having instigated.

It was difficult to combine whole-hearted help with frank and independent criticism, but Rāṇaḍe was particularly expert at steering the Sabhā between the Scylla and Charybdis of uncritical acquiescence and unbridled impatience. When, for example, the Government officials

<sup>1</sup> The village officer whose duty it is to keep the accounts of the cultivators with the Government.

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accused the Sabhā's reports of exaggeration, he induced it, instead of hotly rebutting the charge, simply to insist that its investigators had collected their information with great ability, and that if there was anything improper in their reports it represented the opinions of the people in the famine-stricken areas. Mr. Phātak is probably right when he asserts<sup>1</sup> that if the guidance of the Sabhā's affairs had not been in Rāṇaḍe's hands at this time it would have suffered the disciplining at the hands of Government that actually befell when it was again pursuing famine activities, in the year 1897. On that occasion a hot-headed agent of the Sabhā got it into trouble by an action that was officially stigmatized as "tending to cause unnecessary trouble to the administration, to induce landholders to bring on themselves coercive processes, and to be injurious to the public interests," the result being that "the Poona Sārvaajanik Sabhā as at present constituted must therefore cease to be recognised as a body which has any claim to address Government on questions of public policy." If Rāṇaḍe's hand had still been at the helm at that time, the Sabhā would never have foundered on such a rock.

When the stress of the famine was over, Rāṇaḍe, in order to put his views before the Commission that had been appointed to investigate the best remedies for meeting famine, wrote a paper, entitled "Famine Administration in the Bombay Presidency." In it he warmly gave Government credit for following certain sound principles and methods, declaring that this had "justified the confidence felt by the people in their rulers and greatly contributed to the acknowledged success of famine management in this

<sup>1</sup> न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 250.

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Presidency." Then he went on "to hold up the weak points of the system before the bar of public opinion," and with a great array of facts and figures, he challenged the comfortable official conclusions as to the percentage of the population affected by the famine and as to the percentage of deaths resulting from it.



# V

## THE JOURNAL OF THE SĀRVA- JANIK SABHĀ

LAND PROBLEM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NATIVE STATES,  
AND EDUCATION

**I**N 1878, the *Quarterly Journal of the Sārvajanik Sabhā* began its life of nineteen years. Rāṇaḍe was closely associated with it up till 1893. In many an issue as much as two-thirds of the contents were from his pen, and in its pages he marshalled his ideas on many a political, social, and religious theme. The following Notice to Subscribers which appeared in the first number will explain the nature of the *Journal* :

“A desire has been expressed by several European and Native well-wishers of the Poona Sārvajanik Sabhā that its proceedings should be published regularly in the form of a quarterly publication so as to be easily available for purposes of reference. The Managing Committee of the Sabhā have accordingly resolved to try the experiment of such a periodical publication of the proceedings of the Sabhā. Besides publishing the proceedings it is proposed to take advantage of such a publication to insert independent communications, reviewing and discussing the more important political questions of the day. There are many topics upon which public opinion has to be created and formed before any formal action can be taken in respect of them by the Sabhā. Such topics will find a fitting place in the independent section of the proposed quarterly. . . .

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The Journal will consist of about 48 pages royal octavo to be priced at Rs. 4 per annum, and it will be published in the months of July, October, January, and April."

This is a fitting point at which to try to enter into the general trend of Rāṇaḍe's mind, by reviewing some of his central thoughts, as they can be gathered from the pages of the *Sārvaajanik Sabhā Journal*.

A considerable number of Rāṇaḍe's contributions to the *Journal* deal with India's agrarian problem. Seventy-five per cent of India's population is agriculturist, and the great majority of these agriculturists are small-farmers, who live a hand-to-mouth existence, half-strangled in toils of indebtedness, and falling an easy prey to ruin in times of famine or drought. It is not surprising therefore to find a man of Rāṇaḍe's patriotic and humane nature much concerned with the various aspects of the land problem. We find him, in 1879, writing on "The Agrarian Problem and Its Solution," and on "The Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Bill"; in 1880, on "The Law of Land Sale in British India"; in 1881, on "Mr. Wedderburn and His Critics on a Permanent Settlement for the Deccan," and on "The Central Provinces Land Revenue and Tenancy Bills," and on "Land Law Reforms and Agricultural Banks"; in 1883, on "The Emancipation of the Serfs in Russia," "Forest Conservancy in the Bombay Presidency," and "Prussian Land Legislation and the Bengal Tenancy Bill"; in 1884, on "Proposed Reforms in the Resettlement of Land Assessment," "A Protest and Warning against the New Departure in the Land Assessment Policy," and "The Economic Results of the Public Works Policy"; in 1890, on "Netherlands India and the Culture System"; and, in 1891, on "The Reorganization of Rural Credit in India."

From a study of these papers we discover that Rāṇaḍe



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held several strong convictions regarding India's land problem, and these we shall now endeavour summarily to set forth.

### (1) *The Wretched State of the Indian Agriculturists.*

From many a page of Rāṇaḍe's writings we get the impression that Indian agriculture is a thing of great possibilities, on which might be reared a strong, contented, and flourishing populace, but which somehow seems to be cursed with a withering disability. In his "Land Law Reforms and Agricultural Banks," after having made a characteristically careful survey based on the 1872 Census, he presents the following picture :

"We have thus a poor soil [he is referring particularly to the Deccan] afflicted with scanty and irregular rains, inhabited by a sparse population, for the most part agricultural and uneducated, with no openings for labour save an exhausted soil, with average holdings of less than ten acres per each head of family, burdened with a payment of State demand which represents one third of their net gains, forced to be content with a hand-to-mouth subsistence represented by a maximum of Rs. 60 for a family, and involved in heavy bonds of debt under circumstances beyond their control to a numerous mass of small creditors, largely foreign in their domicile, and not prepared to take up cultivation of land on their own account. These are the salient features of the social and economical condition of the people which it is necessary to bear in mind, while discussing the question of the best method of relief."

(2) *The Causes of the Agriculturists' Condition.* Rāṇaḍe refuses the facile explanation that this distressing state of affairs exists "because the Indian *ryot*<sup>1</sup> is an improvident, spiritless and ignorant peasant, whose condition has been wretched all along and can never be improved"; and the

<sup>1</sup> Ryot is the Anglicised name for a peasant agriculturist.

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Commission that investigated after the Deccan Riots supported him in that refusal. But in any case, thriftlessness and ignorance and lack of spirit are *results* and not causes—as Rānade himself indicated when he drew attention to the change in the character of the French peasantry after the end of the 18th Century.<sup>1</sup> They are defects whose roots can be traced back to faulty social institutions and to unsound economic arrangements.

Rānade sees three main causes of India's agrarian troubles. The first lay in the existing *System of Rural Credit* which was carried on by a vast number of petty village money-lenders, under laws that offered great facilities for extortion. The people were nearly all struggling under a burden of ancestral debt, and paying enormous rates of interest of from 25 per cent. to 75 per cent. Moreover the rural economy, under the prevailing circumstances, made these money-lenders indispensable, for the State had a rigid land-revenue system, whereby the ryot had to pay a certain sum in cash at a fixed time, and as that time was not generally coincident with the time when the ryot realised his produce, he had to borrow from the money-lender to pay the State demand—a condition of things that was of course aggravated in time of scarcity or famine. The result was that the land tax was really to a large extent paid by the money-lender on behalf of the ryot, who was constantly involved in ruinous debt. The whole system thus tended to be uneconomical and wasteful.

The second cause was the *Lack of Capital*—a deficiency that inevitably made the agriculturist's position poor and precarious. There is, he says, "an utter paralysis of

<sup>1</sup> See "The Reorganization of Rural Credit" and "The Emancipation of the Serfs in Russia."

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industry in rural India, due to the poverty of the resources of the classes engaged in the production of wealth."

The third cause, and in Rāṇaḍe's view the most important one, because the other two really arose out of it, was the *Government's Land Policy*. The State's monopoly of land and its right to increase the assessment at its own discretion were, he declared, the two most pre-eminent obstacles in the way of the country's growth in material prosperity. The result of the Government's claim to be the ultimate owner of all the land was that the assessments tended to be screwed up, and the payment of land revenue became a crushing burden that killed all enterprise and initiative. He maintained that :

"The only guarantee against excessive enhancement, which is found effective where land is held in private right, is the competition of landlords among themselves. There is no place for this guarantee under the Indian system, because the land is the monopoly of the State, single and individual. The absence of such a check has resulted in wholesale enhancement all over the country to an extent of which the Government itself is now ashamed."<sup>1</sup>

The burden and the rigidity of the land tax lead to borrowing and to the evils of indebtedness. The uncertainty of the State impost and the unsatisfactory position of the ryot as semi-proprietor, prevent a ready flow of capital to the agricultural industry.

(3) Having thus diagnosed the disease, Rāṇaḍe with a clear voice declares the remedies. They are,—juridical reform to help the ryot to avoid the evils of debt ; banking and loan facilities to encourage the flow of capital into the agricultural industry ; reform of the land tenure system

<sup>1</sup> "Land Law Reforms and Agricultural Banks."

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so as to do away with the uncertainty and the burdenomeness of the temporary settlements.<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe saw a great many of his ideas with regard to juridical reform embodied in the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Bill of 1879. Its aim was to remove the legal encumbrances that were depressing the ryot. It did this by empowering the Courts to go behind the actual contracts where there was a manifest unfairness; by requiring that every bond to which a ryot was a party should be written by or under the supervision of the village registrar; by extending the period of limitation of suits so that the creditor did not have to renew the bond or file a suit every three years; by giving wide scope to the principle of conciliation; by authorising village *munsiffs* to try suits of less than ten rupees; by disallowing compound interest; by abolishing arrest and imprisonment for debt; by restricting the liability of land to be sold for unsecured money debts; and by restricting the liability of heirs to pay ancestral debts.

Rāṇaḍe cordially welcomed the Bill, though he was doubtful of the wisdom of interfering with the obligation to pay ancestral debts, and though he saw that one effect of the Bill would be greatly to reduce the ryot's power of obtaining loans from the money-lenders, while he would nevertheless have to get money somehow if the land revenue system remained as rigid as heretofore. For twelve years (1881 to 1893) Rāṇaḍe was, as a Special Judge under the provisions of the Act in which the Bill issued, an admini-

<sup>1</sup> Where the system of *temporary* settlements is in operation, the land is subjected to a thorough economic survey every 30 years or so and the amount of annual revenue payable by that land is decided in accordance with the results of the survey. Under the *permanent* settlement, the amount of revenue payable has been fixed in perpetuity.

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strator of its purposes. But he always insisted that the relief intended would be achieved only if the Bill were worked in conjunction with a more liberal land revenue policy.

We find Rānāde dealing with the question of the creation of better banking and loan facilities for the agriculturists as early as 1881, pleading that Government should encourage and even guarantee private effort wherever it is willing to undertake the loan business on terms that would leave a proper margin for the ryot's subsistence. He saw that the crying need of capital in the agricultural industry was a matter that urgently required to be dealt with, for the industry was hampered, impeded, and depressed by the lack. He saw too that the credit system which was in vogue in rural India was utterly demoralising and harmful in its effects. His mind turned as was its wont to discover what had been done to meet similar situations elsewhere, and we find in his paper on "The Reorganization of Rural Credit," written in 1891, that he examines what has been done for rural credit in a number of European countries where conditions are comparable to those of India, namely, in Hungary, France, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany. He finds that in these countries the introduction of a system of credit adapted to the special needs of the agricultural classes has worked wonders, and he urges that similar success may be expected in India. In this connection we can see how Rānāde was in the van of progress, leading thought and moulding public opinion. It was in 1892 that the Madras Government began to think about appointing a special Commissioner to inquire into Co-operative Banking in Europe and the possibilities of its application to India, and it was in 1895 that the report of that Commissioner, Sir Frederick Nicholson, was published. Rānāde died before the Indian Co-operative Credit



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Act of 1904 was passed, but we are probably right in assuming that his clear diagnosis of the disease, and his unfaltering exposition of the lines of remedy, helped to bring about the introduction of the Co-operative Credit Movement into India, with all its beneficial results and wide possibilities.

Rāṇaḍe never tired of insisting that the agrarian problem was insoluble without a reform in the land revenue system. "We have," he writes in 1881, "for the last fifteen years, in good and evil report, exposed the failure of the present system, and advocated a permanent settlement of land as the only alternative open to Government, by the side of which reform all other agencies sink into insignificance." The change required is to give the owners of land complete and independent proprietorship. "Let each man's land," he says, "be as much his absolute property as his house or clothes." And again, "The elements of national prosperity are wanting in a country whose principal resource is agriculture, and that agriculture is in the hands of a thriftless and poverty-stricken peasantry, who are weighted down with heavy charges, and whose life and labours are not cheered by the charm and strength inspired by a sense of property."

In maintaining such a position Rāṇaḍe had of course to meet the claim, often put forward, that according to traditions going far back beyond the days of British rule, the State in India is the universal landlord, and that its land-revenue is really a *rent* and not a tax. But he vigorously rebuts that claim.

In its final shape Rāṇaḍe's proposal for a permanent settlement took the form which can be gathered from the following quotation :

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"Our own proposal is that the permanent assessment claimable from all soils should be once for all fixed at a proportion of the gross staple produce, the proportion being based upon the principle of dividing the net profits *in kind* half and half between the Government and the private holder. This *kind* payment so fixed should be unchangeable for all time, whatever improvement the private holder may affect in his land. As however the Government cannot conveniently receive the *kind* payment, its disbursements being all in cash, we would commute the *kind* payments into money values, and those money values would be liable to periodical changes according as prices permanently rise or fall over a great part of the country."<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe felt that Government's unwillingness to grant anything in the nature of a permanent settlement was due to its fear of experiencing a scarcity of revenue if it let go its hold on the unearned increment of the land. Accordingly, he is always careful to point out that extension of the permanent settlement would so develop the resources of the country that both the earned and the unearned increment would greatly increase, and as a result the direct and indirect taxes would come in time to yield a greatly enhanced return. But he also thought that the unearned increment theory is "one of those hobbies that has been ridden to death in this country, involving the Government and the people in common confusion and ruin." He sees two great benefits that would result from the permanent settlement. The first is that private capitalists would be encouraged to invest their capital in the land:

"All improvements in husbandry suggested by science and experience presuppose a great expenditure of capital

<sup>1</sup> "Protest and Warning against the New Departure in the Land Assessment Policy."

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to be invested in the land. The magic of property can alone induce people to incur such expenditure. Neither private sāvākārs nor joint stock land banks will venture capital to sink wells, or to use manures, or throw dams across streams, unless the ryots to whom these advances are to be made possess full proprietor rights over the lands. If land banks have succeeded in other countries so well, most of the success must be undoubtedly laid to the credit of the fact that the peasants in those countries are not tenants of the State, but own the lands they cultivate in absolute right."<sup>1</sup>

The other great benefit is that the land would come into the possession of persons who were able to make an effective use of it:

"The thrifty ryot will maintain his place and extend his operations and rise to a better position, while the indifferent and lazy ryot will make way for better folk who will take his place to the great advantage of the general interest. The change will not be sudden but a slow organic growth, and the new order of things will develop the best interests of all classes without any shock to the vested interests."<sup>2</sup>

Rānade felt that the Government land policy was struggling to keep up a poverty-stricken peasantry in possession of the soil, and was preventing the natural union of capital and land. The money-lender does indeed often become the virtual owner of the land, the ryot sinking to the position of serf to his creditor, but the money-lender has no wish or intention of working the land himself. "The monied classes," writes Rānade, "having at present no interest in the land, cannot occupy the position nor enjoy the status nor discharge the functions of landlords. The absence of such a class retards progress

<sup>1</sup> "Land Law Reforms and Agricultural Banks."

<sup>2</sup> "The Agrarian Problem and its Solution."



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in all directions. The Presidency of Bengal enjoys this advantage over the rest of India, and this circumstance alone accounts for its prosperous and progressive condition.”<sup>1</sup> With the adoption of his land policy proposals, he looks forward to a time when “there will grow up all over the country a provident and thrifty class of landlords whose interest it will be to make the most of the resources of the soil and of the great public works constructed by the Government”; and the political and social advantages of such a change would, he said, be even more important than the economical ones.

The Government of Bombay never exactly adopted the land policy which Rāṇaḍe so vigorously urged, but in 1884 it decided to take steps to reform the assessment laws, and the line along which it proceeded was to introduce a large element of permanency. The classifications of soil that had been evolved were accepted as fixed once for all; no enhancement of tax was to be made on account of improvements made by the holder; changes of assessment were to be made only on consideration of such things as rise or fall in the general level of prices, benefit accruing from the building of railways and similar public works; and limits to the possible enhancement at any one time were set.

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have set out Rāṇaḍe's main contentions regarding the agrarian problem, but he also pointed out many other things that he regarded as requisite to agricultural prosperity. Of these we shall just give the bare list: spread of education; the revival of industries and the diversion of some of the surplus labour from the land; a diminution of taxes and of the extravagant cost of Government; foresight in forest conservancy, and

<sup>1</sup> “The Agrarian Problem and its Solution.”

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especially avoidance of the injury to agriculture wrought by denuding of trees the mountains, hills, uplands, and river-banks.

In the year 1870, local self-government had become one of the great questions of the day. For a decentralising system of provincial finance had been introduced by a Government resolution which expressed the hope that thereby opportunities would be afforded for "the development of self-government, for strengthening Municipal institutions, and for the association of Natives and Europeans to a greater extent than heretofore in the administration of affairs." The wide purpose of political education which the Resolution had in view was in exact harmony with the trend of Rānāde's mind, and in the pages of the *Sārva-janik Sabhā Journal* we find a number of articles from his pen urging the careful and vigorous development of the local self-governing institutions. It was a characteristic of Rānāde's mind always to bring to the elucidation of a problem the light of historical analogies. In accordance with this characteristic, we find among his contributions to the discussion of this question a paper entitled "Local Government in England and India," in which he carefully describes the rise and the present condition of the local government institutions in England, pointing out the lessons of warning and of example that they afford for India.

In 1881, the Government of India further improved the financial position of the Provincial Governments, and instructed the Provincial Governments similarly to endow local bodies from Provincial resources, and to make these bodies more powerful and useful. Departments which the people were likely to understand and to administer well were to be made local. Thus the administration of primary

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education, medical charity, minor public works, registration of vital statistics, model farms, vaccination, and sanitation were to be handed over to the local bodies.

It is of interest to notice that Rāṇaḍe was of opinion that the revenue derived from spirituous liquors and narcotic drugs should be deprovincialised and handed over to the Municipal and Local Boards. He says,

“Certainly no Government officials can be in a better position to take care that people do not abuse their liberties in the matter of intoxicating drinks than the people themselves, especially when these people have by tradition a religious horror of this vice. . . . We also hold that a limited and clandestine consumption is a lesser evil than a widespread legalized consumption. Each community will have the power of controlling the further growth of this pest of Western civilisation, and we doubt not that in such hands the license fees and other duties would be raised to such a pitch as to render indulgence in spirituous drinks and narcotic drugs an extremely costly luxury. There would not be any very heavy loss to revenue, and even if there were a slight loss, surely a Government which, in its solicitude for the welfare of its subjects, has actually repealed *in toto* the import duties on cotton goods, ought certainly to be prepared to sacrifice the interests of revenue to what is unquestionably a nobler object, namely, the emancipation of the people from moral degradation and ruin. The anti-opium party in England would give a more practical direction to their agitation if they would take up this question, and first of all force the hands of the Indian Government to abstain from trading in the vices of their own subjects, or to speak more accurately as being nearer the truth, to abstain from gradually initiating their own subjects into vices for which they have inherited no natural propensity.”<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe's mind was essentially constructive, and accord-

<sup>1</sup> “Administrative Reforms in the Bombay Presidency.”

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ingly when he saw that the Government was concerned to develop and extend local self-government, he set himself to sketch the changes that required to be made in the constitution and the powers of the local bodies, if the Government's intentions were to be realised. Looking forward to a time when the two basal units of representative government in India, namely, the Municipality and the Local Board, would have been placed on a firm footing, and when the way would be open for making the Legislative Councils also representative in their turn, he outlined a new constitution for the Bombay Legislative Council. His scheme, while allowing to Government a working majority in the Council, provided for the inclusion of twelve non-official representatives, who were to be elected by the members of the Municipalities and of the District Committees. Commenting on his scheme, Rānade declares that its leading feature and in his opinion its greatest recommendation is that,

"While in the present state of progress in India, it will give an adequate representation to the people in their Government, it will be far from democratic in its character and results. This double process of election is equivalent to filtering as it were the popular suffrage through intermediate bodies. The masses of the people themselves are, in the present state of their civilisation, incapable of choosing the fittest men to be their representatives in the Legislature, but those who manage the local affairs of these masses, and who possess their confidence, ought undoubtedly to be in a position to choose as deputies for the people generally the fittest to be their representatives in the Legislature. . . . With such a consultative Council of notables at hand, Government will feel that it wields its enormous strength with an easy conscience and its present responsibilities will be greatly lightened."

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That comment reveals Rāṇaḍe's caution. In view of recent developments under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, his suggestions seem very mild and timid. But the official attitude has changed enormously since these days, for at the conclusion of his paper Rāṇaḍe declares that he is fully aware that the majority of his proposals will be denounced as "visionary and radical," by the bureaucratic mind !

India, however, was then entering into the liberal regime of Lord Ripon, and the reforms for the extension of Local Government were zealously advanced. In May, 1882, there appeared a Resolution dealing with the reform of Local Government, of which Rāṇaḍe said that "a State paper more liberal, life-inspiring, and instinct with true statesmanship can hardly be conceived, and has certainly not been seen for many years in India." The recommendations of the Resolution went farther in some directions than Rāṇaḍe and the Sārvaṇanik Sabhā had been inclined to go, and we get another interesting example of the cautious nature of Rāṇaḍe's mind in the counsel of wariness that he gives to the authorities. He says,

"The sudden and sweeping introduction of extreme measures, must always be deprecated in the interests of a healthy and natural growth of free institutions; for such extreme measures, if prematurely and suddenly introduced immediately after a very repressive policy, are calculated to demoralise a people instead of elevating them, . . . Ours is the last pen which would willingly support the continuance of a system of official control and dictation; but a calm reflection of the real state of things compels us to raise our voice against the sudden and sweeping introduction of an important reform, even though we do so at the risk of incurring the displeasure and taunts of a small minority of well-intentioned but, none the less, over-enthusiastic people,



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... The primary object of the Government of India's scheme is to give political and popular education to the people, but efficiency in the local administration cannot be lost sight of. Efficiency and economy in local administration is in fact one of the elements of political education which has to be taught as much as anything else, for no education in the art of self-government can be of the slightest permanent value which does not provide at the same time for efficiency and economy in local administration."

In the following year the Bombay Government introduced two bills to bring into effect the ideas expressed in the Resolution of 1882. Rānade discussed them carefully in the pages of the *Sabhā's Journal* with a keen eye for anything that he thought was unsound, or that would stultify the object in view, and especially for anything that would interfere with the financial independence of the Municipal Committees or the Local Boards.

The Sārvaajanik Sabhā took a warm interest in the Native States, and we find in the *Journal* congratulatory addresses sent on various festive occasions to the Gaikwad of Baroda, the Mahārājā of Mysore, and other rulers. In addition to the congratulations, the addresses usually contained a good deal of very straight advice regarding the responsibilities of Princes and the right methods of governing. In 1882, when the young Gaikwad was on the point of assuming the full rights and privileges of sovereignty, the Sabhā deemed it its duty, respectfully to submit for His Highness's consideration a few suggestions regarding the best form which the administration of Baroda under His Highness's rule should assume. The suggestions were really the work of Rānade, who had in 1880 published in the *Journal* a paper entitled "A Constitution for Native States." He begins by pointing out that great effort is often made to train the future rulers in

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those qualifications which their British guardians deem essential for turning them out cultivated and polished gentlemen. But he insists that "no amount of mere personal accomplishment in the young rulers will cure the defects of the system of absolute rule which prevails everywhere, and the temptations of which prove in too many cases so overpowering as to wash off the varnish of education in a few years, and leave the State none the better, often much worse, for the care taken of its Chief during the minority. Our own impression is that as much, if not more, care should be bestowed upon the training of the State and the People in the arts and habits of expecting and securing responsible rule and well-ordered power, as is now lavished upon the education of the Princes, and in teaching them good manners." It is objected that Indian peoples do not manifest the power, habits, and public feeling "which alone can awe a mischievously inclined ruler, and stop him in the race of vice and cruel exactions," and that a *paper* constitution would be useless. But Rānāde answers that this function of the people can be discharged by the British authority, "whose representative already wields great powers, and has generally the good sense requisite to make him a useful control, and this fear will be efficient as a sanction till the more genuine home-growth of native public opinion learns to respect itself and enforce obedience." Rānāde would have the States adopt a constitution, and the Chief would have to pledge himself to respect it: "Any grievous and long-continued departure from this pledge, should, upon the representation of the subjects, be visited after warning by the Viceroy and local Governors representing the Paramount Power, with the penalty of deprivation under circumstances under which, in a free State, public opinion would have sanctioned and enforced

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deposition." The constitution that he outlines is marked by his usual clear-headed and competent treatment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The principles that Rāṇaḍe would have embodied in such a constitution are the following: (1) Each of the greater Chiefs should be required to nominate a responsible Minister, the nomination to be approved by the representative of the British Power, and the person appointed to be irremovable except for clearly proved incapacity, disloyalty, crime, or misdemeanour proved to the satisfaction of both the Chief and the British Agent. So Rāṇaḍe believes "the present subservient race of men of straw and no position, who rise to be Ministers by pandering to their Prince's worst tastes and vices, and by standing well with the Political Agent by anticipating his whims, must give way to a better class of people." The Chief, the Minister, and the Political Agent would be the three corner-stones of the constitution. (2) The Chief would only exercise power by way of regular appeal from the order of his Minister. There would be no interference with the delegated power of the Minister until his order was passed, and any of the parties affected by it appealed to the Chief. "At present the Minister is either all-powerful, and virtually supersedes the Prince, or he is only a Secretary, affixing his signature to the dictates of unacknowledged ministers in the background who govern the Prince." (3) There should be a Council or Durbār, consisting of the heads of the different departments and a few selected representatives of the non-official classes, the Chief being President of the Council and the Minister its active Leader. This Council should be the final authority. Without its sanction no new tax or new law or great innovation on existing forms should be made. (4) As "the uncertainty of the king's rights in land, the greed of power and the temptations to abuse it, have been the principle sources of misrule and anarchy which have ruined the Native States, both large and small," Rāṇaḍe would make it a condition of succeeding to independent rule that the Prince should agree to the settling of the land-revenue permanently or for long terms on moderate and fixed principles, and to the lightening of all other burdens. (5) There should be separation between the State's public and private expenditure, and the Civil List once settled should not be increased except for good cause and with the consent of Council and Minister. There should be clear division of executive and judicial duties, and of civil and military duties. Offices should be bestowed on subjects of the State who are



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In browsing over the pages of the *Sārvajanik Sabhā Journal* one comes across many passages that throw light upon Rāṇaḍe's religious position, and upon his desire for such social reforms as the raising of the age for marriage and the abolition of enforced widowhood. As we shall have occasion farther on to look at his views on these matters, we shall pass them by now. But before turning from our endeavour to see the outlook of Rāṇaḍe's mind by means of his writings in the *Journal*, we must take some notice of what he wrote on educational matters.

Always critical of the centralising of power and the increasing of official control, Rāṇaḍe delighted to see local resources being utilised and developed. This characteristic is revealed in a paper which he wrote in 1882, called "Primary Education and Indigenous Schools." The opening paragraph is typical of Rāṇaḍe's readiness to make his contribution to the practical needs of the hour, and also of his tendency to look at a problem under the light of past experiences and of established facts. After having reminded his readers that the Bombay Committee of the Education Commission was soon to commence its labours, he proceeds:

"It is time that we should pass in review the various systems of elementary education which have been in operation in different parts of British India during the last 25 years, and by contrasting their results furnish the ground-work of fact on which the authorities more directly concerned with the practical working of this department may be expected to proceed in its future reorganisation consequent on the labours of the Education Commission—the main object of whose inquiry is to ascertain the present state of elementary

of good family and who have qualified by passing prescribed examinations. The laws of the State should be written. There should be an annual statement of accounts. Local government should be freely fostered, under proper control.

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education throughout the Empire, and the means by which this can everywhere be extended and improved."

He then goes on to make a strong plea on behalf of the indigenous schoolmaster, defending him against the common charges of ignorance, laziness, lack of discipline, and wrongness of method, and suggesting that the official authorities give too much importance to a crammed book knowledge of the elements of grammar, geography, and history, while other subjects which are of much more importance in practical life are little attended to. He reminds us also that the class which has now to be reached is the agricultural community forming the backbone of the population :

"They require to be better fed and clothed and housed before they can be asked with advantage to educate themselves. A knowledge of the rudiments of reading and writing sufficient for their daily life is all that can be expected at present, and this knowledge the indigenous system of schools provides satisfactorily and cheaply. A few picked boys might be helped by free scholarships to pass through the higher grades of instruction, but for the majority the simplest rudiments will suffice for many generations to come."

Rānāde calculated that 14,000 more schools were required in the Bombay Presidency, and that to provide these on the prevailing system would require an annual expenditure of fourteen lakhs of rupees. But on the system he proposes he declares that a school could be provided for every village with a population of over 200 souls at an annual cost of only four lakhs. He would incorporate the existing indigenous schools "by extending a small capitation grant for every boy in regular attendance, and an additional grant on the payment by results system for every boy whom these send up for the free scholarship exams." In the next place he would

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"encourage the establishment of more private schools either by the class from which the indigenous schoolmasters come, or from certificated teachers who should be licensed to open schools on their own account, and make their own arrangements for receiving payments in *kind* or money from the villagers, the amount so derived being subsidised by a State gratuity, ranging from 2 to 5 rupees a month, according to the numbers attending the school and its results at the free scholarship exams." And he declared that hundreds of trained and certificated young men who now complain of a want of occupation would voluntarily devote themselves to the work of instruction on these terms.

There was considerable talk about that time of withdrawing State help from higher education in order to be able to do more for primary education. Rāṇaḍe's opinion was against such a step. He felt that it would greatly retard the progress of the country, if that were done before the richer classes had increased in numbers and in appreciation of the responsibilities of their position, and had begun to endow institutions in the way the richer classes in other countries have done. He wrote,

"It is the middle, or rather the hereditary literary and mercantile classes, about 10 per cent of the whole population, which appreciates the present system of instruction, and in the work of Indian regeneration the real leadership belongs to this class of society. Until they are permeated with the leaven of new ideas, it is useless to expect any general or lasting progress. They alone can furnish the teachers who will undertake the work of popular education. India's present circumstances, social and economical, require that those agencies should be allowed to operate freely in all directions, and it becomes as much the duty of Government to help the middle classes to obtain higher education as to assist the lower to secure primary instruction."

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The well-known observation that the style is the man, readily occurs to the mind after a perusal of Rānade's writings. He imparts his ideas by means of sentences that are massive, well-balanced, and heavily weighted with meaning. He never scintillates and he seldom surprises, but he maintains a consistently high level of clear, dignified, and sonorous prose. We do not find flashes of splendour and brilliance of coloured lights, but we get steady and illuminating brightness. There is little or nothing of poetic rapture or emotional glamour, but frequently there occurs a vivid stroke of realistic metaphor, as for example in this sentence, "Proposals for reform should not err on the side of overleaping their mark, any more than they should try to set up dead carcasses in the seats of life and power." Where there is a warmth of passion in his writing, it nearly always comes as the sequel to an accumulation of convincing facts. His closing paragraph is often an appealing climax in which ideas, marshalled with scientific restraint, seem at last to burst into a glowing flame. He was capable of slight inelegancies of diction, which suggest that his attention was mainly concentrated upon the thought to which he was giving expression and that, beyond a certain point, he did not greatly concern himself with the form of the expression. The only thing that might betray Rānade's foreign-ness to the English language is an occasional slightly unidiomatic use of a preposition—and such occasions are extremely rare. When we remember that English was not his mother tongue, we cannot but be astonished at the power with which he could express his ideas through that medium. Courteous and kindly as his nature was, Rānade could yet on occasions hit out hard, and he then reveals himself as a master of restrained invective. The following

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passage, besides being interesting as giving his idea of the qualities required in a ruler, illustrates his ability in this direction :

“Large-hearted sympathy, a generous scorn to catch sectional applause, great moderation of views, honest consistency of purpose, a firm hold of certain large lines of policy, a sense of dignity in asserting independence when great interests require the sacrifice, an even balance of mind in the presence of troubles—these are the attributes which go to make successful rulers of men. Their entire absence in the retired Governor conspicuously marks him out as a costly failure, who by his self-seeking and exaggerated laudation of his own acts has degraded the noble standard of duty in the Indian service which scorned to flatter race pride and left its deeds to speak in glorification of the doers.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sarvajanik Sabhā Journal*, Vol. II, No. 4.



## VI

### POONA, 1871-1893

DOMESTIC GOOD OUT OF EVIL : SOCIAL REFORM FRICTION :  
THE AWAKENING OF MAHĀRĀSHTRA : GOVERNMENT'S  
SUSPICION : GOVERNMENT'S APPRECIATION

WE have run far ahead of the chronological sequence in this attempt to discover the tendencies of Rāṇaḍe's mind by examination of his writings in the *Sārva-janik Sabhā Journal*, and we must now return to the year 1873. It was in October of that year that his wife, Sakhūbāī died. From the time of their coming to Poona her health began to cause anxiety and, finally, the doctors announced that she was suffering from consumption. All through the illness Rāṇaḍe showed the most tender and devoted care. After putting in a hard day's work at the Court, he would break his night's rest by rising from time to time to administer the medicines that the doctor had ordered. Sakhūbāī had a meek and a charming disposition and had won the devoted love of her husband's heart, and the end, when it came, was a sore blow to Rāṇaḍe. For a year after she died he was in great sorrow, not a day passing but tears came to his eyes on her account. He would seek solace in reading the religious poems of Tukārām, beginning after the evening meal and continuing until he fell asleep.

Rāṇaḍe's attitude of mind to some of the issues raised

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by death may be gathered from the following extract from a letter of condolence which he once sent to Rāo Bahādūr G. A. Mānkar, and in which he refers to the loss he had himself received in the death of his wife:

"My own loss has been equally bitter, and at times these mishaps so puzzle one's understanding that the most devout are tempted into sinful despondency and disloyal rebellion. You are, however, too soundly grounded in virtue and piety to be shaken in your faith permanently, whatever may be the temporary shock you suffered. It is not good of friends to give permanent advice in this spirit. Such consolation is only liked when the heart, saddened by its loss, finds out the truth that the world was not intended to be a bower of roses."<sup>1</sup>

Little more than a month after the death of his first wife, Rāṇaḍe was married a second time. The marriage was really the work of his father, who manœuvred Rāṇaḍe into a position which, for a man of his filial conscientiousness and tender-heartedness, was extremely difficult. The incident reveals the father as a man of very astute as well as of very determined character. Himself an entirely orthodox Brāhman, he was afraid that his son would feel it to be his duty, as one of the leaders of the social reform movement, to marry a widow. For that sort of marriage he had a religious horror, and was determined to do everything in his power to prevent it occurring in his own family. Accordingly, immediately after the death of Sakhūbāi, he took steps to have his son safely and respectably married again. He felt that the matter must be carried through with all possible haste, in order to forestall the influence that Rāṇaḍe's social reform friends in Bombay would undoubtedly bring to bear on him. In his endeavour to counteract that influence he went to the rather outrageous

<sup>1</sup> Mānkar, *Sketch of Ranade's Life and Works*, Vol. I, p. 22.

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length of intercepting certain parts of the correspondence that was addressed to his son.

At that time it happened that a gentleman of good family, called Mādhavrāo Ābbāsāheb, had come to Poona with the object of arranging for the marriage of his daughter, Ramābāī. He was an acquaintance of Rānade's father, and the two met and talked the matter over. Rānade's father felt that, if the girl herself were suitable, this was the sort of match that he would like. It was contrary to custom to send a girl for inspection to the relatives of a prospective husband, unless there was a definite offer of marriage. So an old and trusted family dependant was despatched to the place where the girl lived, with instructions to interview her and to examine delicately into the family affairs. The result of his investigation was a verdict of "approved," and then the more committing step was taken, and the girl was brought to visit the Rānades at Poona. Rānade's father instructed Ābbāsāheb regarding the line he should follow if Rānade showed any unwillingness to accept the marriage. The line suggested seems to have been that refusal would involve the girl's ruin, since, having been committed so far, she could not be bestowed in marriage elsewhere.

Meanwhile the matter was being brought to a decision between father and son. Rānade insisted that he did not desire to marry again. He begged his father to remember that he was no longer a child, but a grown up man of 31 years, and ought not to be coerced. He tried to remove the fear that was at the back of his father's mind by offering to give his word not to marry a widow. But the father was adamant against all argument and appeal, and indeed he seemed merely to be angered by the unwillingness to render immediate and unquestioning obedience. Rānade



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saw that the only alternatives were acceptance or open breach. Finally he submitted, saying, "Alas, that you will not listen to me, yet it is my duty to do what you say." Still he tried to bargain for six months more of freedom, as he intended to go to Europe in the immediate future. But even this concession his father would not grant. After that Rāṇaḍe ceased struggling, and accepted the compulsion to marry and to marry immediately, but he laid down some conditions regarding the type of girl he would accept. He stipulated that she must be of good family; and she must be grown-up; and further, he said he would be better pleased if in choosing the girl more stress were put upon intelligence than upon outward appearance.

One evening in the Rāṇaḍe's house the momentous meeting took place which finally settled matters. Rāṇaḍe for the first time looked upon Ramābāi and heard from her father how they had been led to come. Then Rāṇaḍe said to him,

"Have you with your eyes open considered giving your daughter to me? You are an old landed-proprietor and I am a social reformer, belonging to the widow-remarriage party. Though I may look robust, yet I am defective in eyes and ears. Besides that I am going to visit Europe<sup>1</sup> and I shall not do penance for it when I return."

But Ramābāi's father replied that he had been told everything and that he was resolved to give his daughter. Rāṇaḍe then, after a short silence, said that in that case all he would ask would be that only the betrothal should take place immediately, and that the marriage should not take place until one year later. But the girl's father was strongly opposed to any such postponement. Rāṇaḍe said that in that case they should take the advice of his father in the matter, and thereupon the interview ended.

<sup>1</sup> His intended visit to Europe never took place.

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Rāṇaḍe then went to his father and tried hard to get him to change his mind. But after listening to all that his son had to say, he replied that he was afraid that, if there was a year's postponement, the pleasure and the peace of his old age would be destroyed. He declared that the letters and telegrams which he had intercepted from the Bombay people had made him realise the pressure that would be brought to bear upon Rāṇaḍe. Pointing out that the responsibility for the family's affairs had now devolved upon him, he urged that if he kept unmarried for a year, the peace and felicity of the family were bound to be lost. He ended up by saying that Rāṇaḍe should do as he thought fitting, but he warned him that if he did not marry at once, then he could not send the girl back to her own people without humiliating her family and shattering his own peace. He declared, too, that if his son persisted in his course, their connection would cease from that date, for he would go and live permanently at Karvīr.<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe then much against his will found himself, in December, 1873, married to the second Mrs. Rāṇaḍe. He took the step because of his father's obstinate insistence, and in obedience to two principles of conduct the obligatoriness of which he always felt deeply, namely, that a parent's word should not be broken, and that one should not destroy the happiness of one's family. In taking the step he was laying himself open to the charge of being merely a hypocritical lip-server of the great cause of widow-remarriage, and the censure of the world and the jeers of his enemies fell thick and fast upon him; and moreover he was offending many life-long friends, whom his conduct grieved and astonished. Over against the flood of criticism and abuse

<sup>1</sup> The residence of Rāṇaḍe's father was at the town of Karvīr in the Kolhāpūr State, though he often made prolonged visits to his son's house.

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that has been poured on Rāṇaḍe in connection with this event, it is interesting to read the words of Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, in which she expresses the conviction that her husband's attitude on that fateful occasion was one of the brightest points in all his career. She writes :

“ I think that amongst all the examples of his true self-sacrifice and nobleness of mind this one will shine with a special brilliance and importance. Though in the opinion of many persons he was rightly abused, yet in view of his conduct then I feel great respect for him, and all who look at his life with true reverence will agree with me.”<sup>1</sup>

The intense pain that the whole affair caused Rāṇaḍe to suffer, is clear from the intimate glimpses of him at that time which Mrs. Rāṇaḍe gives us in her *Recollections*. The marriage took place as soon as possible after Rāṇaḍe's acquiescence had been secured. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe's mother and other relatives were summoned to the wedding, but, owing to the eagerness of Rāṇaḍe's father to seize the first auspicious date, time was hardly available for them to arrive, and so they were not present. In any case Ram-ābāi's father did not think it worth while to bring them from their distant village, since Mahādev had determined that the marriage was to be celebrated only with the simplest Vedic ceremonies, and without the many pre-marriage and post-marriage rites and festivities that were ordinarily indulged in. The marriage was to take place at the time of evening twilight. In the morning Rāṇaḍe went as usual to his work at the Court, and his father was on tenter-hooks all day lest some of his son's Bombay friends should come down and by some means or other cause the propitious hour to be missed. But when the Court rose

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आठवणी pp. 35-36.

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for the day Rāṇaḍe came straight home, at the proper time the ceremony of marriage was duly performed, and in the evening the bride, walking on foot along with Rāṇaḍe, made her first entry as wife into her husband's house. It must have been a depressing sort of affair. Rāṇaḍe, after the return from the place of the ceremony, without speaking to anyone and without eating anything, went straight to his room and locked himself in, his mind weighed down with an intolerable oppression.

This marriage, which took place so unpropitiously and under such a cloud of gloom and vexation, yet proved to be the beginning of a peculiarly happy and beautiful married life. Rāṇaḍe, true to his characteristic goodwill and constructive bent, at once started to make the best of matters. On the evening of the day when his new father-in-law had departed home, he called his wife and said to her, "You have been married to me, but do you know who I am, what my name is, and so on?" She told him what she knew about him, and then he asked about her home affairs. He then inquired about her reading and writing, but found that she was entirely ignorant of these things. So that very night he had a slate and pencil brought and taught her the first seven letters of the alphabet. As she had had no previous acquaintance with slates or with letters, it took her nearly two hours to acquire the power of drawing these seven letters without looking at the models. Rāṇaḍe thereafter made a practice as regularly as possible of devoting two hours each evening to teaching her. After a fortnight spent in mastering the alphabet, they began to read the children's first lesson book. So they went on progressively with grammar, arithmetic, reading, and writing.

Then, in order to have the study carried on more

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regularly and thoroughly, he engaged a lady teacher from the Female Training College, and she came for a couple of hours each day to teach Mrs. Rāṇaḍe. In this way by 1875, she had studied up to the level of a Fifth Standard child. In the education of his wife Rāṇaḍe always took the keenest personal interest, and the accomplishment of her character and the usefulness of her life well repaid his care. She became a constant comfort and support to her husband, and also a pioneer of the women's cause in India. The Sevā Sadan<sup>1</sup> at Poona was started by her, in association with Mr. G. K. Devadhar, and she worked earnestly for social reform. She was eleven years of age at the time of her marriage, and she survived her husband by twenty-three years.

When Rāṇaḍe came to Poona he associated himself with the Prārthanā Samāj which had been formed there by V. A. Moḍak, in 1870. The Prārthanā Samāj is a reform movement within Hinduism which claims to have returned to the ancient purity of the religion by removing corruptions that in the course of the centuries have crept into the original Vedic faith. Prominent among these corruptions they count idol-worship, caste differences, and the prohibition of widow-remarriage. In 1875 there came to Poona a great religious leader who also was earnestly striving for the removal of these three corruptions, and whom Rāṇaḍe, though he differed from him on several fundamental religious questions, heartily encouraged and supported. This was Swāmī Dayānand Saraswatī. Dayānand had become an ardent religious reformer, and had obtained a great hold upon Northern India, founding

<sup>1</sup> The Sevā Sadan is an institution founded by B. M. Malabāri which seeks the uplift of India through the instrumentality of social, educational, and medical service carried on by Indian women.



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the Ārya Samāj. He believed that the Vedas were written by God, whereas the Prārthanā Samājists deny that, and there were other differences between them. But Rānaḍe was delighted to co-operate with the Swāmī because of those convictions that they held in common, and because he realised that through the personality of the Swāmī a great opportunity was offered of dealing a blow at idol-worship and of helping forward the cause of social reform. India has an ingrained tendency to reverence the *sannyāsī* or holy man, and Rānaḍe knew that ideas preached by Swāmī Dayānand would find a much readier acceptance in the minds of the masses, than the same ideas would if advanced by a person who was engaged in the ordinary work of the world. He therefore paid the Swāmī every respect, helped to secure him opportunity for propounding his faith, and himself attended his meetings. Dayānand delivered fifteen lectures at that time in Poona, and the tumult that arose in connection with his visit reveals the stress and opposition amid which the movement of religious reform struggled on.

On the eve of the Swāmī's departure, arrangements were made for holding a farewell meeting to which he was to go riding on an elephant, and escorted by a torch-light procession. When the opposition party heard of the intended procession, they decided to make an effort to render it ridiculous. They dressed a donkey in a yellow-coloured turban and a golden-threaded shawl, so as to give it a resemblance to the Swāmī. Then, calling it by the name of Gardabhānand, they marched in procession, cheering it through the streets of Poona. This action alarmed those who had made themselves responsible for the real procession, which they saw would very likely lead to trouble, and they wanted to cancel it. But Rānaḍe stood out firmly against

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any abandonment. He pointed out that the affair would act like a sieve, showing how many of the people of Poona were really prepared to follow the banner of social reform. He, indeed, rather welcomed the opposition, because it put the reformers on their mettle; and he reminded his friends that every reform movement has to be tested in the fires of persecution.

Next day, in accordance with Rāṇaḍe's advice, the procession took place, reaching its destination without mishap, as the rival procession came too late. The opposition, however, established itself outside the house where the farewell address was being given, and tried to disturb the meeting by cheering their donkey. One of the Swāmī's supporters went out and applied a cudgel to the donkey's back, and this was the signal for a general mêlée. Stones and brick-bats were flung at the elephant, which had to be moved out of the way. Handfuls of mud, accompanied with volleys of abuse, were hurled through the open windows of the room where the Swāmī's meeting was taking place. The City Magistrate, learning that the affair had gone the length of a conflict, came on the scene, and the Swāmī was enabled to reach his abode in safety. Rāṇaḍe returned home with his clothes all spattered with mud. A policeman was severely hurt and about a dozen people were injured by police-batons. Two ring-leaders of the riot were arrested and punished. Rāṇaḍe had full evidence regarding who the real instigators of the affair were. They also knew this and threw themselves on his mercy. When urged by some of his friends to expose them, he refused, quoting as he did so a verse of Tukārām to the effect that "one should not even think of killing a man who has surrendered."

In this same year there occurred another of those



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gloomy scenes through which Rāṇaḍe and his father preserved their strained unity. Viṣṇuśāstrī Paṇḍit, who was a leading social reformer and who had himself recently married a widow, was passing through Poona on his way to Mahābḷeśwar. Rāṇaḍe invited him to have dinner at his house. When Rāṇaḍe's father learned that hospitality was to be given to the Paṇḍit, he was sullenly resentful, absented himself from the house all evening, and made arrangements for departing to Kolhāpūr on the following morning. Durgā told her brother the whole story, and he, knowing his father's determined character, was much distressed and could not sleep at all that night. He rose early next morning, and went and stood on the verandah of his father's room. His father saw him but paid no attention, and so about an hour passed in silence, each waiting for the other to take the initiative. At last the father looked up and told Rāṇaḍe to sit down, but he made no move. After some time the father again said that he should sit down, and this time Rāṇaḍe replied. "If," he said, "you give up your intention of going to Karvīr, I shall sit down. If you and all the folk go to Karvīr, what is the good of my staying here? I shall go with you. I never imagined you would be so upset about yesterday's affair. If I had, it would never have taken place."

With many such words he strove to pour oil on the troubled waters, but his father remained dourly silent. Nine o'clock struck, and the ordinary routine of the day was being neglected, but still the impasse continued. Then a servant came to say that the carriages were waiting. This made Rāṇaḍe realise that the plan of departure had been finally settled, and, declaring that he had been orphaned on the day his mother died, he left the room. A little while afterwards, he sent a servant to his father with

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a note on which was written, "If you will not abandon your intention of going to Kolhāpūr, I shall send the Government my resignation." This ultimatum had the desired effect. The servant brought back the reply that the departure would not take place. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe says that thereafter her husband never allowed another such occasion of offence to arise.

The old man died about two years after this incident—in February, 1877. It was the liberal education he received that set Rāṇaḍe's feet on the ladder of success, and he always felt that he owed his father a deep debt of gratitude for having maintained him for years at school and college in Bombay, at a cost that must have seriously encroached upon his slender means. Rāṇaḍe was certainly a dutiful son. He once paid a number of debts that were burdening his father. He supplemented his inadequate pension. During his last illness, he watched and tended him, saw that the best obtainable medical skill was secured, and twice took extended leave so as to be with him. When he had to depart for some days, the father cried like a child, saying, "Don't go and leave me." Their last words together concerned the responsibilities of the head of the family. The old man expressed his confidence in his son, who in turn assured his father that he would not forsake his filial duty.

Largely through the influence of Rāṇaḍe and the Sārva-janik Sabhā, the body politic of Mahārāshṭra, which had been slumbering since the destruction of the Peshwās, was beginning to show signs of a new awakening. The following transcription of Mr. Phātak's words indicates some significant developments that had taken place at Poona since Rāṇaḍe had come there six years before. Shops were opened for encouraging the sale of *swadeshī* goods,

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and the idea of diminishing the sale of foreign goods began to take strong hold of the people's mind. All Mahārāshṭra was moved by the activities of the Sārvaajanik Sabhā, and not only that but it became a pioneer for other provinces, and its example was followed far and wide. It aroused political consciousness and moulded political thought. Through the Prārthanā Samāj, a purification of religious belief and practice began. Moreover a desire to make use of libraries became manifest. Means were found of bringing together men of intellectual attainment, and a traffic in ideas on various subjects was begun by means of lectures. A society called the *Oratory Encouragement Society* (वक्तृत्वोत्तेजक सभा) was formed, and it provided a place where young men of promise could display their knowledge and their powers of debate. Besides that, societies were started for the revival of handicrafts, and gymnasiums were opened for the development of physical fitness, and among educated folk desire for proficiency in athletic exercises waxed strong. Under the influence of Rāṇāḍe, direct and indirect, the soul of Poona seemed to awake, and people came to realise that their true duty was something more than the looking after wife and children and dependent relations.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Richard Temple came to Bombay as Governor in May, 1877, and it seems that he was alarmed at the direction that affairs were taking in the political sphere. Rāṇāḍe was recognised to be the master-mind at the back of the whole movement, and it appears that a Government regulation was put into force at that time for the express purpose of securing his removal to a place where his influence would have less scope than at Poona. This

<sup>1</sup> न्यायमूर्ति रानडे pp. 253-4.

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regulation was to the effect that subordinate judges should not stay for more than five years in the one place. It was at once applied to Rāṇaḍe and he was transferred to Nāsik.

He went to Nāsik in January, 1878, but took a holiday in February, returning to Poona for that purpose. While there however he fell seriously ill with a remittent fever, and his friends got very anxious for his life. Rāṇaḍe's own mind was notably calm. His attitude seemed to be to leave it to his body aided by the medicines to struggle with the disease, and to give himself over to Divine meditation. He arranged for a Brāhman of reputable character to sit by him and read the Hindu Scripture called *Vishṇu-sahasranām*<sup>1</sup>—a work calculated to lead his mind into deep contemplation of God's nature and attributes.

When Rāṇaḍe escaped from the dangers of this illness and was restored to health, there was great rejoicing, for Indians of all shades of opinion felt that he was an asset to the nation, that he was advancing its status, and that his life held in it the promise of greater service to come.

At Nāsik we see Rāṇaḍe throwing himself into various projects of social, political, and religious importance. Along with S. H. Deshmukh he led a movement for the development of Marāṭhī literature—a society being founded to encourage the publication of books in Marāṭhī on such subjects as history, science, social reform, biography, and Sanskrit studies. Again we find him, when at Poona for the hot weather holiday, preparing a petition to the Viceroy, which was sent up from a meeting of Poona citizens, urging that the Government should discontinue its

<sup>1</sup> *Vishṇusahasranām* means the thousand names of Vishṇu and the work is so called because in it the attempt is made to indicate the fulness of God's nature by describing Him under 1,000 names.

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hostile attitude to the native press. Then when he returned to Nāsik in June, he founded a public library, and began a vigorous movement for the building of a town hall, and he also made plans for the starting of a branch there of the Prārthanā Samāj.

In April, 1879, the trouble connected with the name of V. B. Phadake, and known as Phadake's Rebellion, began. Rāṇaḍe came under the suspicion of Government on account of it. He was believed to be in league with the rebel, and he was suspected of having had a hand in the burning down of two Government buildings in Poona, and he was thought to be lending support to the lawless activities of certain bands of robbers or at any rate to be cognisant of their movements.

The suspicions were really baseless, but it was natural enough for Government officials, who were already in an apprehensive state of mind on account of the manifestations of growing political and national consciousness among the educated classes, to connect the two movements together. Once the connection had been made in Government's mind, it was inevitable that Rāṇaḍe would be the person on whom suspicion would chiefly fall. For Rāṇaḍe was the head and centre of that developing social and national consciousness. The political and social leaders of Mahārāshṭra used to gather at his house for discussion, and men who had served the cause with much trouble and effort would feel that a word of praise from Rāṇaḍe made it all worth while.

V. B. Phadake was born in 1845, and had studied with a view to becoming a doctor, but had given that up and gone in for Government service. He became obsessed with the idea of freeing his country from British rule. The hatred of foreign rule that rankled in his mind, was



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reinforced by an unfortunate experience that he had as a Government servant, on an occasion when he applied for leave of absence to go and visit a sick friend, and failed to obtain the leave until it was too late. He gave up his position and set himself to the task of rousing the country. He went about lecturing in many places, and for a time followed the path of constitutional agitation. Soon, however, thinking that way to be futile, he abandoned it for the path of violence. Seeing that, while the memory of the Sepoy Mutinies of 1857 was still fresh, it was impossible to get educated men to join in any attempt forcibly to expel the British Government, Phadake turned to the ignorant peasants, and soon all the Poona district was agog with excitement over "Phadake's Rebellion."

On the night of 13th May, 1879, the cry was heard in Poona that the Budhwār Palace was on fire. The fire brigade, police, and military were soon on the spot, and besides that hundreds of private citizens lent a hand in extinguishing the flames. Then came the news that the Viśrāmbāg Palace was also on fire. These buildings were the two historic palaces of the Peshwās and their loss was a great grief to the people of Poona, though the efforts made resulted in the saving of most of the Viśrāmbāg.

Government connected these conflagrations with Phadake's Rebellion, and formed the opinion that the educated people of Poona had entered into a great conspiracy to overthrow the Government. The burning of the two palaces was believed to be a sort of dramatic signal of revolution. The Anglo-Indian papers fanned the flame of Government suspicion, and the burning of the palaces was utilised to stampede the Government and break down its sense of proportion.

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Rāṇaḍe, now the object of bitter newspaper attacks, was under a heavy cloud of suspicion, but he went on with his work unmoved. He was, however, resolved to get to the bottom of the matter. He inquired with a detective's skill into the burning of the Palaces, and traced the cause of the conflagrations back to a certain Government clerk whose name curiously happened also to be Rāṇaḍe. When the man's guilt was established he was handed over to the police, to whom he confessed. It turned out that he had embezzled some Government money and had sought to hide his crime by setting fire to the buildings so as to destroy the record-books.

Government made Rāṇaḍe feel its displeasure by giving him, within a week of the fires, orders to transfer at once to Dhulia—a place more remote and less important than Nāsik. This order should have come to him through the High Court, but Government ignored that and sent the order direct. Rāṇaḍe's friends wanted him to refuse to go, and urged him to make the excuse that Dhulia was a bad place for his weak eyes. But Rāṇaḍe answered,

“Do not ever suggest such a thing. As long as I am in Government service I do not want to put forward any excuses. If ever the time comes to make excuses, I shall hand in my resignation and be free. That is the line of conduct I much prefer.”

When Rāṇaḍe had settled down at Dhulia, he noticed that often he did not receive his mail at the due time, and sometimes that his letters had obviously been opened and resealed, and he also observed that such letters as had not been opened were signed with the signatures of well-known dacoits. He therefore realised that his correspondence was under police scrutiny, and was careful to send to the police



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the fabricated letters with the dacoit signatures. This went on for about two months, and then one morning the English Assistant Collector called at his house and invited him for a walk. On the way he declared that the misunderstanding had been cleared up, and expressed regret for the scrutinising of Rāṇaḍe's correspondence.

It was about that time—i.e., about the end of July—that Phadake was captured. His examination made it clear that Rāṇaḍe had no connection whatever with the dacoits, and the rebel's diary placed it beyond doubt that the Poona Brāhmans had had no connection with the rebellion. Phadake was sentenced to imprisonment for life at Aden, and four years later he died there.

It is often the fate of constitutional agitators to find themselves suspected by the authorities of implication in the schemes of violent revolutionaries. The underlying reason for this probably is that the reformer, while wedded to constitutional methods, yet feels keenly that one of the chief obstacles to the attainment of his object is just the *inertia* of the average good citizen. He is therefore loath to condemn unconditionally any one who has freed himself from that fatal inertia, even though he strongly disapproves of the person's methods. Rāṇaḍe without a doubt entirely repudiated Phadake's method, and was disgusted with it. But he probably felt that the patriotism of the man, which had in it no selfish aim, and which indeed led him to throw away opportunities of self-advancement, and to expose himself and his family to beggary, was admirable. He no doubt wished that that devoted spirit could be disseminated far and wide, and could be harnessed to sane, constructive, and practical ideas, and so the country's advance to prosperity and to freedom be secured.

As it was now clear that Rāṇaḍe had had no connection

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with the seditious movement, and also as Sir Richard Temple had returned to England, the cloud of suspicion lifted, and in 1881 he was appointed to the post of Presidency Magistrate at Bombay, whither he went in January of that year. Up till now Rānade's legal reputation had been based upon his knowledge of civil law, but as Presidency Magistrate he had to deal with criminal law. It soon became clear that he was equally expert in this other branch. He did, indeed, come in for some very severe criticism by the Anglo-Indian papers over the case of a European on whom he inflicted a punishment of six months hard labour for stealing fifty rupees, while shortly before that he had only given one month's simple imprisonment to a Hindu who had tried to steal a hundred-rupee note that he had been sent to change in the bāzār. The outcry died away however when the Thana District Judge, Mr. Coglein, pointed out the difference between the two cases. The Hindu culprit had a clean past record and had apparently fallen to a sudden great opportunity of easy gain. The European had broken by night into the room of a railway guard, opened his money-box, and taken all he could get, and, as his loaded revolver showed, was prepared to commit even more serious crime.

There is nothing specially noticeable to delay us long over this short period in Bombay. Rānade's coming gave a new lease of life to the Sangamsabhā, a branch of the Prārthanā Samāj formed to discuss difficult moral problems and questions relating to the reform of religion. We find him seeking to moderate the headstrong zeal of certain Prārthanā Samājists who were urging that the reformers should not allow themselves to be held back at all by consideration for the feelings of parents. He, on the contrary, urged that,

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"It is not fitting that we should give pain to the mind of our parents by holding inflexibly to some matter that seems true to us. If the law of the king is unjust, trouble is given to hundreds and harm is worked to the people. But it would be futile for someone, knowing the truth, at once to break the law. What he ought to do is to work for the filling of the minds of others with his thoughts about the law. Then after a time, when every man's understanding has become like his, the law will be annulled. The case with regard to a household is just the same. There is really no value in applying *kunkū* to the brow and in wearing bangles on the arms, but we should not therefore rub out the *kunkū* and break the bangles. Our organic relation to the household circle must be remembered. By planting the right thoughts in them we should change their minds."<sup>1</sup>

He made a speech at the Bombay Oratory Encouragement Society in which he gave an account and a classification of the Marāṭhī books published during the past sixty years. He was much depressed over the condition of things, and spoke of his countrymen as being impenetrable as stone, and doubted whether in spite of all encouragement and coaxing any progress would be made. He declared that, burdened with the notion that it is for one particular caste to engage itself in the affairs of knowledge and that the others have no right to do so, his country was then in a position similar to the position that other countries were in before the invention of printing.

His short stay in Bombay at this time came to an end at the close of March, 1881, when he was transferred to his own beloved town of Poona. We shall now go on to outline his official career from 1881 to 1893.

It was in the capacity of Subordinate Judge that he came back to Poona, but soon he was made Assistant to Dr.

<sup>1</sup> Phāṭak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 329.

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Pollen with the title of Assistant Special Judge to supervise the cases which arose in connection with the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act. Rāṇaḍe's duty was to tour in certain of the districts of the Deccan to which the Act had been applied. The appointment was a fitting one because Rāṇaḍe had given a great amount of attention to the problem which the Act was designed to solve. His subordinate position was little handicap to his initiative, for his superior was a shrewd man who appreciated his worth. Rāṇaḍe did his work with a rare conscientiousness, going personally to every corner of his field. This had not been the practice of his predecessors, and once Ramābāī expostulated with her husband on the subject, asking him why he did not, like the others, cause the records to be sent to him at the tālukā town, instead of himself laboriously going to every little village. Ranade answered :

“The salary which the Government brings us is not meant for our touring at ease. If one sends for the records, waiting at the tālukā town, then certain cute persons will give to the official just such a picture of the situation as they wish, and so the real condition of the farmers will not be discovered. The Government's chief purpose is to get to know the real state of affairs and so be able to remedy the troubles. Some people do not understand this and are simply lazy. If, however, we ourselves wander about among the villages, then we actually meet the householders and the elders of the village, and by talking with them learn whatever we want to know.”

One of the main features of the Relief Act was the setting up of Conciliators whose duty it was to try to get quarrels settled without the ruinous recourse to law. Owing to the difficulty of securing reliable and influential men for this job, there was some talk of repealing the Act. It was due to Rāṇaḍe's enthusiastic work for the Act, and

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also to his strong advocacy of it, that it was not repealed. He was by no means blind to its defects, but he supported it because it was an advance in the right direction and brought considerable advantages to the ryots.

His work under the Act was interrupted for a short time in 1884, when he was appointed Judge of the Small Causes Court, at Poona. Soon, however, Dr. Pollen went to Europe on furlough, and Rāṇaḍe returned to the work of administering the Relief Act, in the capacity of Acting Chief Special Judge. Bitter complaint was made in some of the Anglo-Indian newspapers over the appointment, on the ground that the office ought to have been given to some Englishman of the Indian Civil Service. Government however was not moved by the agitation, and the papers had to console themselves with the thought that the appointment was only temporary. When, in 1887, the appointment was made permanent, the outcry was again heard. He held the post until his elevation to the bench of the High Court in 1893.

In 1885, Lord Reay, the Governor, nominated Rāṇaḍe to the position of Law-member of the Bombay Legislative Council. A friendship had grown up between the two men. Rāṇaḍe's qualities were recognised by Lord Reay, and he wanted to make use of them. The place to which Rāṇaḍe was appointed had been vacated by a European civilian, and Rāṇaḍe being an "uncovenanted" Indian the appointment again gave rise to much discussion. He was Law-member of the Council again in 1890 and in 1893.

In 1886 the Government of India set up a Committee to examine into expenditure and to suggest ways of retrenchment. Lord Reay, knowing Rāṇaḍe's grasp of the details of the financial administration, secured his appointment to the Committee as the representative of the



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Bombay Government. While staying at Simla, engaged on the work of this Committee, Rāṇaḍe, in a letter to one of his friends, wrote, "I prize my connection with the Committee chiefly for the rare opportunities it affords of learning a good many details of large questions, the papers regarding which could not otherwise have been made available to us." Another passage from the same letter shows us Rāṇaḍe's way of working on this Committee,— "Every subject I take up requires a good deal of reading. I take notes freely and these notes are utilised by being turned to account in a formal official Note which I submit to the Committee or rather to the more prominent of its members for correction. After passing through this test I get it printed and circulated."

We are told that Rāṇaḍe in reading the proofs of his memoranda would constantly make corrections and additions, until after the fifth or sixth proof the printer's patience would become exhausted, and he would print the matter off finally without allowing Rāṇaḍe a chance of further alterations.

Rāṇaḍe put in minutes of dissent to many of the sections of the Committee's Report. The majority recommended that in the Legal Department the number of sub-judges should be decreased, and that when new ones were appointed the rate of pay should be diminished. To these proposals he objected. Again the majority recommended that the retrenchment axe should be applied to the Department of Education. As education was one of Rāṇaḍe's dearest interests, it is not surprising to find him dissenting vigorously from that proposal. In 1887, he was made Companion of the Indian Empire (C.I.E.) in recognition of his valuable work on the Finance Committee.

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In 1893, K. T. Telang died, and the resulting vacancy on the Bench of the Bombay High Court remained unfilled for two months. There was no doubt about Rāṇaḍe's fitness for the position, and all over India it was being said that he ought to be appointed. But his close connection with Nationalist movements and aspirations stood in the way. European friends who were aware of the feeling on the matter in Government circles told him that he would get the promotion, if only he would indicate that he was prepared to give up his close connection with these things, but such a course was quite foreign to Rāṇaḍe's mind. His claims for advancement to the position of Thāṇa Sessions Judge in 1880 had been passed over because of his connection with the popular cause, and on that occasion the then Chief Justice, Sir Michael Westrop, had written to him, "Your writings come in the way of your promotion. If you want promotion, spare these great efforts." Rāṇaḍe's reply was to the following effect,—“I am thankful to you, Sir. So far as my wants are concerned, they are few and I can live on very little. Concerning my country's welfare, what seems to me true that I must speak out.”<sup>1</sup> This time, however, the position that was his by merit was given to him.

There was great joy in India over Rāṇaḍe's promotion. Sholāpūr got the first chance of voicing that joy, and then came the turn of Poona, whither he soon proceeded. There an immense fuss was made, and the prolonged rejoicings were popularly given the name of the Mahādev Festival. Practically every society in Poona took notice of the occasion, and he had sometimes to attend four or five gatherings in one day. The most imposing meeting seems

<sup>1</sup> Phāṭak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे pp. 503 ff.



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to have been one held at the Hirābāg, on which occasion a very large crowd assembled, the scene was enlivened with fire-works and illuminations, and the hero of the hour while on his way to the place of meeting had flowers showered upon him at various points on the route.

Feeling that he had had enough of these festivities, "the uncrowned king of Poona," as Rāṇaḍe was often called, planned to slip away one evening to Bombay, without the Poona folk knowing of it. But before the train had left the station his admirers got wind of his departure, and it was to the accompaniment of garlands and music and enthusiastic expressions of admiration that he went off.

The extraordinary stream of felicitations that Poona poured upon Rāṇaḍe at this time was not a tribute to one who had caught the popular fancy by some chance brilliance or lucky accident. It was a tribute paid to years of steady and fruitful work—a statement whose truth can be realised by a glance at the list of institutions which Rāṇaḍe founded or which, being in existence before he arrived, were strengthened and built up by him. That list includes the following: The Sārvaṇanik Sabhā, the *Quarterly Journal of the Sabhā*, the Town Hall at Hirābāg, the Poona Native General Library, the Industrial Conferences, the Industrial Exhibitions, the Industrial Association, the Reay Museum, the Cotton and Silk Spinning and Weaving Company, the Metal Manufacturing Factory, the Fergusson College, the Female High School, the Vernacular Translation Society, the *Lawād* or Arbitration Court, the Sub-Judges Conference, the Poona Mercantile Bank, the Prārthanā Samāj Mandir, the Oratory Encouragement Society, the Marāṭhī Literature Encouragement Society, the Poona Spring Lectures, the Poona Dyeing Company, the Reay Paper Mill.

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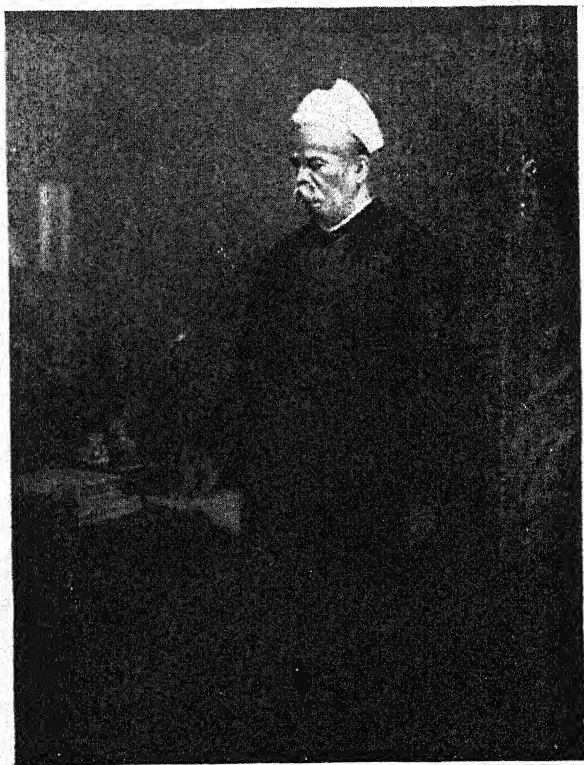
Rāṇaḍe's generosity led him to assist liberally with the expenses of providing the buildings and other things required by these institutions. We are told, furthermore, of his erecting a house of meeting in front of a temple at Sholāpūr, building a *Dharmaśālā* at Āḷandi, providing drinking-water facilities at the foot of the Parvati Hill, giving books to libraries, etc. His house used to be crowded with poor guests, and protégés of various kinds. He gave liberal assistance to poor students in the way of meals, fees, and money for books. But on the eve of his departure from Poona, his generous spirit showed itself in a particularly munificent gift, the presentation of a sum of Rs. 25,000 for the benefit of certain of the Poona Societies. To ensure that the money would not be lost in the event of a society becoming extinct, he committed the total sum to the care of two Trustees, who had the responsibility of applying the interest for the benefit of the societies that he had designated.

## VII

### THE SOCIAL REFORMER

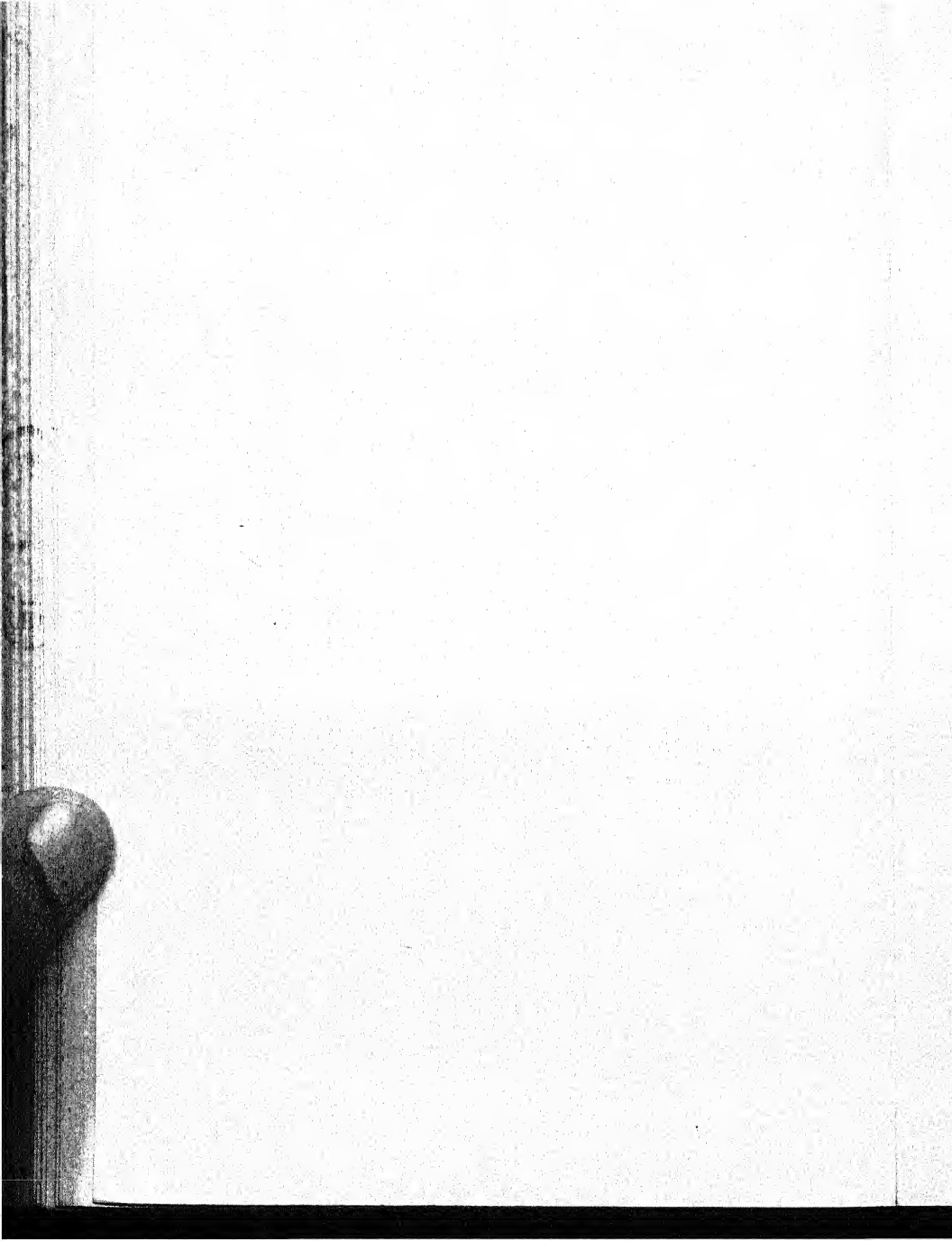
#### EFFORTS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND PRINCIPLES

CONTACT with Western life and thought introduced into India a new leaven. As it gradually spread, the minds of sundry men here and there throughout India became in greater or less degree illumined with a new sense of values, and became uncomfortable in the face of social customs which that new sense of values condemned. These customs were,—child-marriage, enforced widowhood, ill-assorted marriages (i.e., between old men and young girls), the dowry-system with its attendant evils and hardships, extravagant expenditure on marriage festivities, the seclusion of women and the withholding of education from them, the regarding of foreign travel as sinful, the caste-system with its breaking up of the social body into a number of exclusive parts which will not intermarry and will not dine with one another, the holding of a large proportion of the population as outcastes or pariahs whose touch is defiling, customs of obscenity connected with the Holi and other festivals, and the profession of the nautch-girl. From his college days Rāṇaḍe had been among the number of the social reformers, among those, i.e., who realised that these customs were evil things which weakened and poisoned the life of the people, and who sought to find and to apply the right



*Photograph by favour of Dr. N. A. Toothi*

THE ELPHINSTONE COLLEGE PAINTING  
OF RĀNADE



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remedies. All his days Rāṇaḍe was an ardent social reformer, and in the period of his life with which we are now dealing he did yeoman service for the cause.

In 1884, B. M. Malabārī, the renowned Bombay poet, journalist, and social reformer, wrote two pamphlets—one on “child-marriage” and the other on “compulsory widowhood.” These are known as *Malabārī's Notes*. They were sent to all the official and the non-official leaders in India, and also to England. They gave a great impetus to the attack upon two of the most glaring of India's social evils, and marked the beginning of a period of hot agitation and oftentimes bitter discussion, which lasted till 1891. Rāṇaḍe had promised Malabārī that he would help him in every way in his crusade, and loyally he kept his promise. His general opinion on the matter is indicated in the following words :

“After making all allowances, it cannot be denied that Hindu society contrasts very unfavourably with all other civilised races in both the points noticed so prominently by Mr. Malabārī. It is also not denied that early marriage leads to early consummation, and thence to the physical deterioration of the race, that it sits as a heavy weight on our rising generation, enchains their aspirations, denies them the romance and freedom of youth, cools their love of study, checks enterprise, and generally dwarfs their growth, and fills the country with pauperism, bred of over-population by weaklings and sickly people, and lastly that it leads in many cases to all the horrors of early widowhood.”<sup>1</sup>

Malabārī's proposals involved getting Government to pass a law laying down the minimum age at which girls might be married, and in other ways legislating on matters

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *The Status of Woman in India*, pp. 13-14 by Dayārām Gidūmal.



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concerning Hindu marriage. The orthodox party were horrified at the idea of making such a request to Government, for it seemed to them wrong and irreligious. State action was also opposed by many men whose zeal for social reform was beyond all question—they included Dr. R. G. Bhandārkar and Sir Nārāyaṇ Chandāwarkar—their position being that so long as popular sentiment on the subject remained unchanged, State action, whether legislative or executive, would not only be impotent to secure the object in view, but would not unlikely prove harmful to the cause of real reform by provoking hostile forces which were at the time inactive and dormant. Rāṇaḍe however vigorously supported the proposal to seek for a remedy through legislative enactment.

The Government of India sent *Malabārī's Notes* down to the Provincial Governments and to the leaders of thought and opinion, with a request that it should be informed of their views. This fanned the interest in the controversy. There were meetings and counter-meetings, petitions and counter-petitions.

In his personal reply to Government's request for his views on *Malabārī's Notes*, Rāṇaḍe said that in the absence of a self-regulating power in Hindu Society, "the only way to secure the emancipation of the Hindu community from this bondage to past ideas is to withdraw one by one these fetters of so-called religious injunctions, and turn them into civil restraints, which are more amenable to change and adaptation." He proposed State action on the following lines: (a) That minimum marriageable age-limits both for boys and girls should be fixed by law, not compulsory in the sense of annulling marriages contracted before attaining the said limits, but only permissive in the sense of leaving the parties concerned freedom to question the binding

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character of the marriage so contracted—the age limit to be 16 to 18 for boys, and 10 to 12 for girls, subject to exceptions in particular castes and localities. (b) That Municipal and Local Boards should be empowered to certify ages and that the parties concerned should be required to obtain licences from these Boards, before marriages were solemnised. (c) That the Universities should, after a reasonable notice, confine their honours and distinctions to those who, in addition to their other qualifications, submit to the condition of remaining single during their College or School course. (d) That the Penal Code be amended so far as to declare sexual intercourse with a girl under 14 to be rape. (e) That men of 45 and upwards should be prohibited by law from marrying young virgins; so also the marriage of young men with girls older than themselves should be prohibited as being unnatural and mischievous. (f) That a second marriage during the lifetime of the first wife should be allowed only if there be in the first wife one of the defects in view of which the Śāstras sanctioned such a marriage.<sup>1</sup>

When the Government of India examined the replies to its inquiry regarding opinion on *Malabārī's Notes*, it found that there was a majority against the reform proposals, and accordingly it decided to make no move in the matter. In promulgating its decision it said, "that interference by the

<sup>1</sup> These defects were,—(1) quarrelsomeness, evinced, e.g., in hatred of husband or in the doing of things that were against his wishes; (2) addiction to some vice, as, e.g., wine-drinking or adultery; (3) suffering from contagious disease; (4) barrenness; (5) giving birth to female children and not to a male child. (See *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti* Chapter iii, v. 73). It must of course be understood that point (f) does not express Rānāde's own personal ideal. He laid it down as a restriction upon practices which were much more licentious and much more unfavourable to women.

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State is undesirable, and that the reforms advocated by Mr. Malabārī, which affect the social customs of many races with probably as many points of difference as of agreement, must be left to the improving influences of time, and to the gradual operation of the mental and moral development of the people by the spread of education." The reformers were of course deeply disappointed. Rāṇaḍe faced the situation with his usual calm optimism. He saw considerable gain in the fact that at any rate the prolonged agitation and acute discussion had awakened the public mind on the question.

In 1884, there had occurred one of those incidents which, as often happens in the march of social reform, brought a great evil clearly under focus, and became a centre of hot controversy. This was the suit brought by one Dādājī for the handing over to him of the girl Rakhmābāī, to whom he had been married when she was 13 and he was 20. Rakhmābāī was the daughter of a Mr. Pāṇḍurang, who died in 1867, worth 25,000 rupees. His wife afterwards married again, and therefore according to Hindu law forfeited her right to her late husband's income, which passed to his daughter. When Rakhmābāī became mature, Dādājī asked that she be sent to his house, but agreed to postponement owing to her being still young. In 1884, however, he had determined that she must now come to him, and to enforce his right he applied to the Courts. The reason which Rakhmābāī pleaded for not going to her husband's house was that he was consumptive, illiterate, and uncultured. The lower court decided in her favour, but the higher court decided against her, decreeing that she must go to live with her husband or, if she refused, must be punished with imprisonment. The whole matter showed what the position of woman in Hinduism was—for

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a woman married in childhood might be compelled to go and live with a husband who was unequal to her and who indeed was repulsive to her. In 1887, Principal Wordsworth, of the Elphinstone College, established a Rakhmābāi Defence Committee, and among others Rānaḍe took part in its chivalrous work.

The burning passion with which Rānaḍe felt the wrongs inflicted upon women by the social customs of Hinduism, is shown by an incident that happened in May of 1887, at a meeting of the Oratory Encouragement Society, when the subject of Woman's Rights was being discussed. Several of the speakers had, to the evident satisfaction of the audience, displayed a very reactionary attitude towards woman, pouring contempt upon the female character and talking of the dangers of revolutionary change in the ancient Veda-based Hindu Society. Rānaḍe, speaking at the end in his capacity as chairman of the meeting, passed over all the other subjects and devoted two whole hours to the subject of woman's rights. Speaking trenchantly and passionately, he said that an endeavour had been made to prove that the way to keep husband and wife together was by means of punishment and imprisonment, and that it was woman that was the blameable party. Both the reasoning and the charge were false. The *Śāstras* show that in ancient days women were always protected, served, revered, and honoured by their men relatives. When we ascribe such faults to women then we are charging with these faults our mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives, and it is astonishing that we do not see that no greater ingratitude can be imagined than thus to disgrace them. Rānaḍe seems to have felt in the attitude of the speakers a sort of bravado, a cowardly valour shown at the expense of the defenceless women, and it made his

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blood boil. "We should feel shame," he cries, "that people all over the world, having advanced farther than we, are despising us—but leaving that aside, if the valour of our manhood is to be exercised against the women-folk of our homes, that is the lowest depth of baseness."

Perhaps the greatest thing that Rāṇaḍe did for social reform was his work in connection with the Indian National Social Conference. When the Indian National Congress was founded at Bombay, in 1885, the leaders felt that the national movement should not be exclusively political, but that side by side with the political questions, matters relating to the country's social economy should be considered. In accordance with this view, Dewān Bahādūr R. Ragunāth Rāo and Rāṇaḍe gave addresses on social reform at the meeting of the first Congress. However the leaders, after much careful thought, came to the conclusion that it would be better if the Congress did not make it part of its function to deal directly with the discussion of social questions. Those who felt keenly the urgency of the social problems resolved, after mature deliberation, to start a separate movement, to be called *The Indian National Social Conference*. Ragunāth Rāo and Rāṇaḍe were the moving spirits, and the first Social Conference was held at Madras, in December, 1887. It was closely related to the Congress, following it immediately, and being held in the same *mandap* (i.e., marquee). The position, as Rāṇaḍe once put it, was as follows,—“The Congress leaders have granted us permission to carry on in their camp our propaganda on our own responsibility.” The Congress and the Conference together made Indians feel that politically they were a united nation, and that their social arrangements were being subjected to the inspiring influences of the national spirit.



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The object of the National Social Conference was to stimulate and to strengthen the forces of reform by bringing together every year in mutual consultation representatives of the various associations and movements which, scattered over all India, were struggling with the social evils. A great deal of good and hopeful work in the way of social reform was being done here and there throughout the country. The Conference brought such work to a focus and made the inspiration and example of it available for others. It strengthened the hands of local societies, formulated methods, and guided the reforming aspirations. This unifying of the social movement in India was an achievement of great importance. It brought the ideas of social reform home to a much wider public, and it gave powerful reinforcement to the scattered reformers in their struggle with inertia and reaction. Rāṇaḍe threw himself into the work with immense zeal and with untiring perseverance. In 1889, the Conference Organisation was launched on its career. Ragunāth Rāo was Secretary, but Rāṇaḍe's was the guiding hand and the inspiring mind. They sent out letters in all directions, stirring people up to start social reform societies in different places. There was, of course, a strong local society at Poona, and through its agency, in 1889, the reform oaths were taken by 549 persons—the vows including abstinence from alcoholic drinks, cessation from the practice of doweries, agreement to widow remarriage, promise to give education to girls, and agreement not to bring about child-marriages. People of high position took part in the Poona society, including ināmdārs, jahāgīrdārs, and chiefs of the Deccan. The Mahārājās of Baroda and Indore subscribed to its funds. Mussalmans and Christians joined as well as Hindus.

Each year when the Social Conference met in some one



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of the provincial capitals of India, Rāṇaḍe used to give an address in which he summarised the reports that had come in to him from Social Reform Associations all over the land. The following is a typical opening to these addresses: "Mr. President and Gentlemen," he said at Allāhābād, in 1892, "once more we meet in this busy week of December, this time in your historical and holy city, to take stock of our year's achievements, to count our losses and gains, and to pledge ourselves to help each other in the unceasing struggle to better our condition."

Reading those Conference addresses one feels as if one were watching an able general directing a campaign. We see him keeping his eye always on the ultimate goal, and judging every apparent success or failure in its relation to that goal. We see him pressing his forces onward, and yet taking care that impatience and over-enthusiasm do not carry the line too far forward. We see him keeping up the morale of his army by infusing into it his own robust and reasoned optimism.

In the Conference addresses Rāṇaḍe deals, as was inevitable for one who was at the centre of so much controversy, with many questions of general principle in social reform. There is, for example, the question, What place should social reform take in patriotic activity? Many men of patriotic spirit were condemning the social reform propaganda as mischievous, or were regarding it with a sullen disapproval, or were saying that at any rate it could very well wait until the political situation had been satisfactorily dealt with. To this last point of view even K. T. Telang, much to Rāṇaḍe's distress, lent the weight of his great influence, when, in a famous speech, he advocated advancing along "the line of least resistance."

Now Rāṇaḍe's mind was essentially balanced and com-

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prehensive. He saw human life as an organism and hated partial or extremist methods of improvement. The opinion which he held consistently all through his career and expressed again and again, was that it is impossible to separate politics and social reform. Perhaps the most striking expression that he gave to this opinion was in the last year of his life when, as President of the First Bombay Provincial Social Conference, held at Sātārā, he urged that the different fields of human activity are inseparably inter-related, and that one can no more separate them than one can separate the shape of the rose from the perfume of the rose :

“Whether in the political, or social or religious, or commercial, or manufacturing or æsthetical spheres, in literature, in science, in art, in war, in peace, it is the individual and collective man who has to develop his powers by his own exertions in conquering the difficulties in his way. If he is down for the time, he has to get up with the whole of his strength, physical, moral, and intellectual, and you may as well suppose that he can develop one of those elements of strength and neglect the others, as try to separate the light from the heat of the sun or the beauty and fragrance from the rose. You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economical system when your social arrangements are imperfect. If your religious ideals are low and grovelling, you cannot succeed in social, economical or political spheres. This inter-dependence is not an accident, but is the law of our nature. Like the members of our body, you cannot have strength in the hands and the feet if your internal organs are in disorder ; what applies to the human body holds good of the collective humanity we call the society or state. It is a mistaken view which divorces considerations political from social and economical, and no man can be said to realise

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his duty in one aspect who neglects his duties in the other directions."<sup>1</sup>

Though a keen member of the Prārthanā Samāj, Rāṇaḍe yet deprecated the view that it was only through a religious reformation that advance could be made, and that all the efforts of the reformers ought to be directed towards the purification of religion. Such a view was too one-sided for his conception of the organic nature of society and, moreover, he was always afraid of breaking the historical continuity, and afraid of making the orthodox people reactionists out of a mere spirit of opposition.

Nevertheless, a close study of Rāṇaḍe's social reform addresses leads us to say that he does really in his own way give religion the predominant place in his social philosophy, or at any rate he leaves that place empty for religion to occupy. We can trace clearly in his writings the recognition that religion is the central spring of life, and that in religion we touch the organic life-power which can flow out in healthy activity to all the members. For, in discussing measures for the reform of outward conditions, Rāṇaḍe is constantly recurring to the importance of what we might call *inward personal religion*. In an address delivered at the Hislop College during the Nāgpūr Conference of 1891, he is reported as having said :

"Some there were who thought that when they were asked to lend their support to reform, there was some objective reality outside themselves that they had to deal with. There was no such thing. The thing to be reformed was their own self, heart and head and soul, their own prejudices were to be removed, their superstitions to be eradicated, their courage to be strengthened, their

<sup>1</sup> See the volume, *Indian Social Reform*, compiled by C. Y. Chintāmaṇi, Part II, pp. 127-8.

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weaknesses to be conquered, in fact their character to be formed again so as to suit the times, so as to fit with the spirit of the age."<sup>1</sup>

At the Conference at Amrāotī in 1897, Rāṇaḍe argued that the root of India's troubles was the possession of the people's minds by a set of wrong ideas. He asks :

"Now what have been the inward forms or ideas which have been hastening our decline during the past three thousand years? These ideas may be briefly set forth as isolation, submission to outward force or power more than to the voice of the inward conscience, perception of fictitious differences between men and women due to heredity and birth, passive acquiescence in evil or wrong-doing, and a general indifference to secular well-being almost bordering upon fatalism. These have been the root ideas of our ancient social system. They have as their natural result led to the existing family arrangements where the woman is entirely subordinated to the man and the lower castes to the higher castes, to the length of depriving men of their natural respect for humanity."<sup>2</sup>

Rāṇaḍe insists that the only way in which the evils of the time can be removed is by placing ourselves under the discipline of better ideas. "The current of these ideas must be changed, and in the place of the old worship we paid to them, we must accustom ourselves and others to worship and reverence new ideals." He therefore seeks to inculcate the idea of a wide fraternity in place of proud isolation. He seeks also to show that heredity and birth are not the only factors determining a person's life for good or evil. "The Law of Karma can be controlled and set back by a properly trained will, when it is made subservient to a higher will than ours. . . . Necessity or the Fates are faint

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Social Reform*, Part II, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 91.

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obstacles in the way of our advancement if we devote ourselves to the law of Duty."

As an antidote to the poisonous idea that "all human life is a vanity and a dream, and we are not much concerned with it"—an idea which he characterises as "atheism in its worst form"—he puts forth "a healthy sense of the true dignity of our nature, and of man's high destiny." But above all he insists on the need of getting away from childish dependence upon authority :

"With too many of us, a thing is true or false, righteous or sinful, simply because somebody in the past has said that it is so. Duties and obligations are duties and obligations, not because we feel them to be so, but because somebody reputed to be wise has laid it down that they are so. . . . When we abandon ourselves entirely to this helpless dependence on other wills, it is no wonder that we become helpless as children in all departments of life."

The new idea is not to be the idea of a rebellious overthrow of all authority, but that of freedom responsible to the voice of God in us. "Revere all human authority," Rāṇāde says, "pay your respects to all prophets and all revelations, but never let this reverence and respect come in the way of the dictates of conscience, the Divine command in us." It is this self-respect, or rather respect for the God in us, which Rāṇāde singles out as requiring above all things to be cultivated. We see again and again in his writings the appreciation of the fact that victory for social reform is to be won not by mere modification of social institutions but by the changing of the hearts of individuals. His emphasis is on the inward aspect, as e.g.,

"Reforms in the matter of infant marriage and enforced widowhood, in the matter of temperance and purity, inter-



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marriage between castes, the elevation of the low castes, and the re-admission of converts, and the regulation of our endowments and charities, are reforms only so far and no further, as they check the influence of the old ideas, and promote the growth of the new tendencies."<sup>1</sup> "The issue," he said, at Madras, in 1898, "is not this or that particular reform about which people have so much controversy, but the general spirit of purity, justice, equality, temperance, and mercy, which should be infused into our minds and which should illumine our hearts. Is it to be the spirit of justice, charity, mercy, toleration and appreciation of all, or is it to be exclusiveness, haughtiness, pride, cruelty and misery of all kinds? The choice lies with us and we may choose which we prefer."<sup>2</sup>

The question of *method* in social reform is always important and often controversial, and Rāṇaḍe frequently refers to it. Four main methods were advocated and used for effecting the desired reforms and for inducing people to support them. These were (1) the traditional method, (2) the conscience method, (3) the legislation method, and (4) the rebellion method. Rāṇaḍe made use of all these except the last. The method of *rebellion* meant separating from the conservative, orthodox people and forming a new camp. He recognised that this way with its sweeping aside of compromising and complicating bonds, had its merits, but he thought that its demerits ruled it out. For it broke the historic continuity and tended to make the orthodox reactionist out of the sheer spirit of opposition. "I am," he said, "constitutionally inclined to put more faith in the other methods."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Social Reform*, Part II, p. 95.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Address at the Lahore Conference, 1893.



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The *traditional* method seeks to temper the winds of reform to the sensitiveness of orthodoxy by showing that the reforms are not really innovations at all but are the carrying out of the spirit and even of the letter of the ancient scriptures. Rāṇaḍe, always averse to breaking completely with the past and keen to carry the orthodox party with him if possible, made much of this method. Two contributions that he made to the literature of the subject are notable. The one was written about 1870 and was called "Vedic Authorities for Widow Marriage." It is a fine example of the moral fervour, the discreet caution, and the studious research which Rāṇaḍe showed in these controversies. He writes :

"The advocates of re-marriage have never maintained that a woman after her husband's death should not live a life of single devotion to her deceased husband. They freely allow that such heroic self-sacrifice to a sentiment is peculiarly meritorious. But a woman who cannot live this species of life, a woman who is widowed when a girl, before she knew who was her husband, before she knew what her duties as a wife were—surely such a woman cannot practise this devotion. It is on behalf of such women that this reform is a peremptory and crying want, and to require them to live a life of devotion in the manner Manu prescribes is a simple mockery of all religion and justice."

And his summing up of his examination of the sacred texts is :

"There is thus express permission in the Vedas, express permission in the Smṛiti law common to all the yugas, and express permission in the special law for the Kaliyuga ; and it has been shown that all the prohibitory texts are mostly very vague and general, and so far from abrogating, only restrict the number of contingencies when remarriage is permitted by the law. And such of them as are more

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particular are controlled by the Parāshara text, first because it is so special, and secondly, because it is the binding authority for the age."

The other contribution was a paper which he wrote in 1888 for Dayārām Giḍūmal's book, *The Status of Woman in India*. The paper was entitled "The Śāstric Texts on the Subject of Infant Marriage," and in the following year it appeared in the *Sārvajanik Sabhā Journal* with the title of "The Sūtra and Smṛiti Dicta on the Subject of Hindu Marriage." In that paper Rāṇaḍe traces the deterioration of the status of woman in Hindu society, from the time represented in the Sūtra writings when late marriage was the rule and widow re-marriage was common, when monogamy held sway, when female education was approved, and woman's place in society one of freedom and dignity,—to the time when early and even infant marriage came to be insisted on in the name of religion, and the remarriage of widows condemned, and when so far as the male was concerned monogamy lost its strictness, when women were put on a level with Śūdras in respect of exclusion from Vedic learning and performance of Vedic rites, and were condemned to life-long pupilage, first to the father, afterwards to the husband, and lastly to the son. He analyses the opinions of the Smṛiti writers and concludes that for girls 12 may be taken as the authoritative minimum age for marriage and 16 as the minimum age of consent (i.e., the age below which consummation of marriage is not permitted), while for boys the corresponding ages are 18 and 25 respectively :

"Leaving the old Sūtra period as too remote to influence the present condition of our population, no such objection can be urged to the minimum limits laid down above, 12 and 18, and 16 and 25 as supported by the vast majority

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of the really authoritative texts. Those who seek reform in this matter do not desire to turn marriage into an affair of mutual romantic love. They do not want to thrust aside the parental authority, or to diminish the sense of responsibility now felt. They advocate a return from modern corruptions to the real sense of the old Smṛiti texts. . . . It is hoped that after the present reaction subsides men will come to see that in clinging to the existing order of things they are really setting at naught the traditions of their own best days and the injunctions of their own Śāstras, leaving aside all considerations of duty and expediency; and that, in calling for a change on the old lines, the reformers seek not to revolutionize, but only to lop off the diseased over-growth and excrescence, and to restore vitality and energy to the social organism."

As regards what we have called the *conscience-method*, which makes its appeal directly to the sense of right and wrong, Rāṇaḍe constantly uses it. He reminds us that the voice of God is the only voice to which we are bound to listen, and tells us that "all of us cannot listen to it when we desire it, because from long neglect and dependence upon outside help, we have benumbed this faculty of conscience within us."<sup>1</sup> In pursuance of this method reformers strengthened themselves by taking pledges regarding female education, widow-remarriage, abstinence from alcoholic liquor, suppression of child-marriages, etc.

The *legislation* method meant the enforcement of reform either through the agency of the caste authority or through the agency of the State. This method was, Rāṇaḍe said, "a constraint imposed by the wise upon the ignorant in their common interest. It has its merits as well as demerits, but it must be advocated only in those cases in which the first two have no chance of success, for it is a

<sup>1</sup> Address at the Amrāotī Conference, 1897.

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coercive method, which should not be resorted to until other ways have been tried.”<sup>1</sup>

The controversy that raged round what is known as the Age of Consent Bill is interesting not only as one of the landmarks in the agitation for social reform in India, but also because of the way in which it brought this method of reform by legislation into the full blaze of criticism and defence.

Rāṇaḍe stood up stoutly for the policy of invoking the aid of the State to raise the age of consent from 10 to 12. There was, however, hot opposition to the proposal, not only from the right wing of religious orthodoxy, but also from many of the social reformers themselves, and particularly from the new school of thought that was coming to vigorous life under the leadership of B. G. Tīlak. Tīlak had come to the conclusion that the root necessity was political liberty, and that this end should be pursued to the exclusion, if necessary, of everything else and he felt that by all means the independence, confidence, and pride of nationality must be fostered among the Indians. He felt that the social reformers were too deeply tinctured with Western ideas, and that their criticism and denunciation of national institutions and national customs would tend to the disintegration of the nation. At first he was not altogether hostile, though he thought that the masses were not prepared for general legislation. He proposed that those who approved of the reforms should bind themselves to carry them out, and that the legislation should apply to the reformers alone and not the masses. A meeting was held to discuss his idea, but it did not find acceptance, as Rāṇaḍe showed from an analysis of the

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Nāgpur, 1891.

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position, as revealed by the Reform Societies' reports, how futile, owing to the variety of opinion, such a procedure would be. Tīlak's attitude stiffened into one of hostility. He strongly criticised the Social Conference in a letter published in the *Bombay Gazette*—to which Rāṇaḍe fully replied. He waged a wordy warfare against the reformers in his paper the *Kesari*, while Āgarkar counter-attacked in his paper the *Sudhāra*. Tīlak, his biographer tells us,

"while emphatically not unfriendly to social reform, believed in the imperative necessity of checking, from the larger national standpoint, the disintegrating forces by fostering a due sense of pride in and respect for the social and religious institutions of the people. Mr. Tīlak was for the blending of the old culture and the new. He strongly resented state interference for the simple reason that reform to be durable must be a growth from within. Mr. Tīlak was gradually convinced of the futility of social reform as it was then propagated and was for the above reason compelled to adopt first an attitude of constructive opposition and then of neutrality."<sup>1</sup>

We can gather the lines of Rāṇaḍe's answer to Tīlak's position from his lecture on "State Legislation in Social Matters" which was delivered in the year 1885:

"The State in its collective capacity represents the power, the wisdom, the mercy and charity, of its best citizens. What a single man, or a combination of men, can best do on their own account, that the State may not do, but it cannot shirk its duty if it sees its way to remedy evils, which no private combination of men can check adequately or which it can deal with more speedily and effectively than any private combination of men can do."

With regard to the fact that the Government in India is a foreign one, Rāṇaḍe admits that jealousy of foreign

<sup>1</sup> D. V. Āthalye, *The Life of Lokamanya Tīlak*, pp. 54-55.



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interference in social matters is not a bad sign, and says that if the interference were of foreign initiation the argument against would be irresistible. But he says,

“The initiation is to be our own, and based chiefly upon the example of our venerated past, and dictated by the sense of the most representative and enlightened men in the community, and all that is sought at the hands of the foreigners is to give to this responsible sense, as embodied in the practices and usages of the respectable classes, the force and the sanction of law.”

Rāṇāde admits, too, that there is reason in the contention that institutions, like constitutions, must grow and cannot be made to conform with foreign ideals to order. But he insists that

“The change is sought not as an innovation, but as a return and restoration to the days of our past history. Those who advocate it justify it on the authority of texts revered, and admitted to be binding to this day. The intermediate corruption and degradation was not of the nation's seeking. It was forced upon it by the predominance of barbarous influences, and by the intolerance of ruthless conquerors. That force having ceased to be operative we must now return to the old order of things, if we are to grow to our old proportions.”

Again he urges that Hindu social affairs are at present regulated by very stringent written laws which are enforced by our Courts of Justice. “What is now proposed is to substitute the more ancient and righteous law for a later degenerate offshoot of that law, cancel the travesty of law which is condemned by all, at least more amenable to reason, and utilize the force of State sanction as a final support.”

To the contention that the law should be made use of only for suppression of positive crimes, whereas the evils now sought to be remedied are not crimes, Rāṇāde replies :



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"In most cases enforced widowhood and disfigurement, the destruction of home sanctity by polygamous connections, the stupidity of baby-marriages, are not impulsive acts [i.e., they have not even that excuse] they are done in cold blood, and they inflict life-long and undeserved misery on helpless victims, while the offenders suffer but little. But so far as their moral heinousness is concerned, they are inflictions of injustice without any redeeming features, and the criminal responsibility of the nation is beyond all reprieve."

At the beginning of 1891, the fight over the Age of Consent Bill was at white-heat, for it was then that the Bill came before the Supreme Legislative Council. Great meetings, for and against, were held at Bombay and Poona. There was fierce controversy regarding the words of the Śāstras on the matter, Bhandārkar and Telang being the protagonists who sought to prove that the Śāstras sanctioned the reform, and Tīlak the protagonist for proving the opposite. The anti-reformers declared that the change would mean the destruction of true religion, and that the Government would be breaking its promise of religious neutrality if it enacted the new law. A meeting held by the reformers at the Kṛīḍābhuvan in Poona had to be hastily brought to an end because students pelted the platform with stones and bricks. During all these disturbed days, Rāṇaḍe was on tour in the Nagar District, but at Āhmednagar he took the opportunity of speaking on the matter and of showing unambiguously that he heartily favoured increasing the minimum for the age of consent. From Nagar he went to the Sholāpūr District, where he contracted cholera and was at the gates of death. When he returned to Poona, after his recovery, the Age of Consent Bill had been passed into law.

The anti-reformers, expressed their feelings of disgust

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and resentment by means of mimic satire. They prepared a pretended corpse, dressing it with much ingenuity, with eggs in its mouth, a necklace of biscuits round its neck, a bottle of spirits on its breast, and copies of the *Indu Prakāsh* and the *Sudhāra* under its arms. Followed by a crowd of children and loafers, it was carried before the dwellings of the prominent reformers, where the shout was raised that they and all the reformers in the world were dead. Finally the "corpse" was carried away and flung into a nullah.

In 1890, Paṇḍitā Ramābāī's Śārada Sadan (a resident school for Indian girls, especially widows) was transferred from Bombay to Poona. Its chief object was to provide an asylum for young widows. The money required had been collected by the Paṇḍitā in America. Rāṇaḍe, who was in thorough sympathy with the object, attended a meeting at which Miss Hamlin, the Paṇḍitā's assistant, tried to stir up the support of the Poona folk. During the meeting Rāṇaḍe's mind seems to have been much agitated as to what he should do. At the last moment he saw his path clear, and, just as the people were starting to leave the hall, he rose to his feet and said that there and then they must set up a body to carry on this Widow's Home, otherwise they would be failing in their duty. As a result of the short, but forceful, speech that he made about 40 persons signified their willingness to take part in the directing body. The *Kesari* made much capital out of the fact that the Paṇḍitā was a Christian, and urged that it was not right to give the education of Hindu women into her care. Rāṇaḍe's answer was that the fact of the teacher being a Christian was irrelevant, especially as it had been agreed that the school would be strictly secular in its character. The important point, Rāṇaḍe said, was not the Paṇḍitā's religion but the useful-

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ness of her institution, and the advantages that through it would be enjoyed by friendless Hindu widows. Later on, however, when it became evident that some of the inmates of the institution were being strangely attracted towards Christianity by the Paṇḍitā's personal character, Rāṇaḍe and his friends—in 1893—publicly disowned all connection with the institution. Rāṇaḍe started a plan for the establishment of another Sadan, and got the length of publishing a notice in the papers regarding his intention, but the plan did not mature.

On 4th October, 1890, took place the famous Missionary Tea at the Pāṅch Howds Mission. Fifty-two Brāhman gentlemen, including Rāṇaḍe, were present on that occasion. In the course of the evening the ladies of the Mission handed round tea and biscuits for the guests, and many of the Brāhmins partook of the refreshment offered to them. Rāṇaḍe himself did not touch the biscuits, nor did he put the cup to his lips, but in order not to show disrespect to his hostesses he took a cup in his hands and, later on, put it down on a table.

Nothing happened until six months after. Then a certain rabid anti-reformer published in the *Vaibhava* an exact account of what had taken place at the Tea, and followed that up shortly afterwards with an account of a dinner at which three Non-Brāhmins were present which Rāṇaḍe had given in honour of a friend who had recently returned from a visit to Europe. Under this stimulus the orthodox leaders at Poona brought the social pressure of excommunication to bear upon those who had participated in the Missionary Tea, and also upon priests, cooks, and water-carriers who kept up relations with the offenders. They were thus able to make things very unpleasant. When ceremonial days came round, and when the time

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came for thread-investiture or marriages, the excommunicated families could get no official Brāhman to perform the required rites. This caused much mental pain, especially among the women-folk. Rāṇaḍe did what he could to get Śāstrīs and Brāhmanas who were attached to himself to carry out the ceremonies, but still the perplexity continued, and most of the people had not the patience and courage to follow his advice of quietly enduring the inconvenience until more enlightened days came round. It therefore became clear to Rāṇaḍe that if he persisted in opposition to the authorities in this matter considerable numbers would drop out of the reform movement.

Meanwhile, the matter had been brought before the Śankarāchāryā, and when he had been given to understand that Rāṇaḍe and the others would bow to his decision, then, at the beginning of 1892, he sent down two Śāstrīs to act as arbitrators. Rāṇaḍe let it be known that his party would not decline to accept a penance which was compatible with self-respect, but that they would have nothing to do with any penance that aimed at degradation and public scorn. After hearing the matter the Śāstrīs decided that on the performance of a mild penance—the payment of small money presents to Brāhmanical priests—the excommunicated persons should be reinstated in the Brāhman community.

Rāṇaḍe himself felt no urgent need or desire for such reinstatement, for his own family peace had not been disturbed by his excommunication. He knew, however, that the peace of others had been deeply disturbed, and he therefore proposed that the acceptance or refusal of the terms of reinstatement should be a matter for the individual, and be settled according to the needs of the individual's

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position. But many of his friends felt strongly that it would not be fitting for them to take the penance if Rāṇaḍe did not do so also. He therefore finally decided to make the required appeasement, and on 15th May, 1892, he went from Loṇāvlā to Poona and performed the penance.

For a month afterwards Indian and Anglo-Indian newspapers poured criticism upon Rāṇaḍe's conduct. It was asserted that his love for the people had waned, that his youthful courage had departed, that he had crushed the social reform movement, etc. Rāṇaḍe defended his action in a letter that he sent to the *Bombay Gazette*, and in a lecture on "Mental Prepossessions" which he delivered on 5th June, 1892. In that lecture he pointed out that ever since the Age of Consent Bill controversy, the enemies of social reform had been on the look-out for some stick with which to beat the reformers and had found it in the Pāṅch Howds affair. The anti-reformers wanted to use the tea-party incident in such a way as to make the masses think that the breaking of caste, by eating and drinking with people of other religions, was a chief point in the social reform movement. Seeing that if this idea were to gain currency, there was a probability of the whole reform movement collapsing, Rāṇaḍe and his friends did not disregard the authority of the Śankarāchāryā. Here then we get the reason why Rāṇaḍe sanctioned the doing of the penance. To have refused would probably have led to a big secession from the social reform ranks, and that for a reason which was not essential—for eating and drinking with men of other religions was no part of Rāṇaḍe's social reform programme. If such caste-breaking intercourse by chance took place, then he saw no harm in accepting a penance which was in accordance with the Śāstras, in order to put matters right. The reason why,



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as well as sanctioning the taking of the penance by any of his followers who desired to do so, he himself took it, was his unselfish consideration for his friends. He saw that refusal to do it himself would lead to continued trouble and unhappiness in the families of many of his followers who would not take the penance if their leader did not. Unselfishness, as Mr. Phātak points out, often receives the compensation of popular credit. But Rāṇaḍe's unselfishness in this case resulted inevitably in public discredit, and yet having resolved what he ought to do he faced the consequences with quiet unconcern. Even his wife misunderstood him at the time, and for two or three days felt that he had made a big mistake. In an interesting passage in her *Reminiscences* she tells us how bitter her thoughts were when he went off to do the penance. Why should he go and involve himself in that disgrace, why not leave it to those whose lives were rendered troublesome by the excommunication? When Rāṇaḍe returned by the evening train, she deliberately avoided going near him from a delicate feeling that his mind would be greatly perturbed. But on looking surreptitiously into the room, she beheld him engrossed in his mail and his newspaper just as if nothing unusual had occurred. Having made up his mind what his duty was, he had done it, and after that his mind was at peace. The criticisms of him, often bitter and violent, made by enemies and by friends could not break that calm serenity.<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe's conduct in connection with the sequel to the Missionary Tea offers a wide field for reflection. Was he right to sanction the penance and to take it himself, or by giving way to prejudice instead of unbendingly

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आठवणी p. 195.



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opposing it, was he not, as John Morley puts it, in effect saying, "I cannot persuade you to accept my truth, therefore I will pretend to accept your falsehood."<sup>1</sup> In coming to a conclusion on this point we must give full weight to the fact that Rāṇaḍe was consciously averse to the *method of rebellion*. We must remember that he was like a general in a campaign, seeking to lead to victory through a hostile country the small, ill-organised, and poorly disciplined army of Reform. Western education introduced about fifty years before had opened the eyes of Indians to glaring defects in their social institutions. The early generations of English-educated Indians accepted with unbounded admiration Western ideas and ways of life, and with indiscriminating scorn renounced the old Indian ways. But Western education touched only a mere fringe of the population, and those whom it did not touch were shocked and horrified by these new ways. Gradually the instinct of self-preservation and the pride of race asserted itself, and the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme. In the reaction all attempt at reform came to be opposed as unpatriotic and as irreligious. Those who had the courage to speak out against the social evils were subjected to much harassing, if petty, persecution. The very word "reformer" came to bear for the great majority of Indians a meaning that was evil. It looked as if the cause of social reform was doomed. It was Rāṇaḍe who saved it.

"For 20 or 30 years," writes Mr. Patwardhan, "he was practically the life-breath of the reform movement. He organised the movement, focussed the various forces and spasmodic activities of individual reformers; he shaped it anew, and reconciling it with the past soldered it with

<sup>1</sup> *On Compromise*, 2nd Ed., p. 168.

## The Social Reformer

all that was noble and precious in our heritage. He established a continuity where all seemed to be broken up and confused. License was over and its place was taken by chastened liberty. Revolution yielded place to evolution. Disruption ceased and a process of slow organic growth set in. He secured the health and well-being of the spirit of reform and was content to let alone the form it manifested itself in."<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe himself once, in a letter written to Telang, said, "There are some matters in which we must stand out, but there is no reason why we should stand out on all matters simply for the fun of the thing." And perhaps the matter of the penance might be left at that—regarded as a point which in view of all the circumstances the mind of the strategist deemed it advisable to concede. One cannot but feel, however, that the concession was the outcome of a certain tenderness or lack of iron in Rāṇaḍe's character, and that it was not merely a cool-headed move in a game. Sincerely and eagerly zealous of reform, he was at the same time temperamentally averse to self-assertion and revolt. He strove unweariedly to reach a lofty goal, but always by that path which seemed to involve the minimum of friction. His heart burned with sympathy for the Indian widow, and he laboured incessantly to improve her lot, but he could not bring himself to lay on the altar of that high cause his filial obedience and his family's peace. Though a great reformer, he had not that adamant nature which, esteeming the present travail as of no account, breathes an exalted, if stern, "amen" to the

<sup>1</sup> Prof. W. B. Patwardhan, "Justice M. G. Rāṇaḍe and Social Reform in Western India," *Indian Interpreter*, January, 1911. The whole article is of interest for the estimate of Rāṇaḍe's character.

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fateful necessity expressed in the words, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."<sup>1</sup> Rānade was too fundamentally cautious and had not in him enough of the spirit of pugnacity to make him adopt Gāndhī's dictum that "a reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, his service to social reform in India was immense, and was such as probably only a man of his type could have rendered. Wisdom is justified of her children.

<sup>1</sup> The Gospel according to St. Matthew, chap. x, verse 37.

<sup>2</sup> Article in *Young India*, 5th February, 1925.

## VIII

### THE POLITICIAN

#### THE PATH TO INDIA'S NATIONAL GOAL

IT is admitted on all hands that Rāṇaḍe did a very big work in the political education of India, and also that his efforts along the less obtrusive lines of political agitation were very effective. For the last quarter of the nineteenth century his was the inspiring and dominating mind at the back of most of the political movements carried on by Indians. He was among the "seventy-two good men and true, the foremost amongst India's intellectuals"—to use the words of Mr. H. P. Mody<sup>1</sup>—who "on the fateful morning of the 28th December, 1885, sat down together to carve out a future for their country." The Indian National Congress which then came into being proved a great instrument for rousing the national consciousness and for guiding the national movement. Mr. A. O. Hume has the honour of being regarded as the Father of the Congress, but he was accustomed to call Rāṇaḍe his "Political Guru." By his weighty and well-informed utterances, Rāṇaḍe stimulated thought and moulded opinion on such burning political questions as the Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, the Civil Service Examinations, the Central Asia Question, etc. His advice was eagerly sought by all sorts of political leaders.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, *A Political Biography*, Vol. I, p. 183.

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He saw that though India was not in a position to make its will directly effective, yet much could be done indirectly by bringing pressure to bear on the British Parliament. Already in this way alteration of the Press Act, and satisfactory adjustment of the expenses of the Afghan War had been secured; and Rānāde always urged that full use should be made of existing means of getting their wishes respected, without sitting idly waiting for the day when they would have power to choose their own representatives. The policy he advocated was that the Indian Nationalists should form a connection with the British Liberal Party, win its sympathy, and through it get Indian grievances brought before Parliament. He saw that under the British system it was only by having a question made a party matter that a proper hearing for it could be secured. It was in pursuance of this policy that, in 1876, he collected money to assist the candidature of Henry Fawcett, a politician whose warm and helpful devotion to the cause of India was a dominant feature of his career. Again, in 1885, Rānāde took much interest in the preparation for the work of a deputation of Indians who were being sent to bring Indian affairs to the notice of the British electorate, and he himself composed the rough draft of a leaflet that was to be distributed among the electors.

In 1885, the new law for Local Self-government was brought into operation. Rānāde thought it a step in the right direction and, indeed, he felt that it was to some extent the fruit of his own efforts, made through the Sārva-janik Sabhā. Therefore, when he discovered that his old friend, Mr. Kunṭe, was vigorously lecturing against the new Act, he was much grieved. Fearing that Kunṭe's efforts would have the result of delaying the introduction of self-government in the district, he resolved to counteract him.



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One day he went into a hall in Poona where Kunṭe was lecturing and sat among the audience. Thereupon Kunṭe, to mark his annoyance, turned his back on the audience and went on speaking vigorously for a time. When he had finished, Rāṇaḍe went up and sat near him. After the meeting had ended he asked Kunṭe to come for a drive with him in his carriage, but he angrily refused and went to his own carriage. Rāṇaḍe quietly followed him and said, "Very well, if you will not come in my carriage, I shall go in yours," and so he did. In silence they drove off. During the drive their differences were composed, and from the next day, Kunṭe's lectures against the Act ceased.

It is of interest to note that G. K. Gokhale, one of the great men of Indian public life, witnessed this incident and was much impressed with the part that Rāṇaḍe played in it. Two years later he was introduced to Rāṇaḍe, and from that time onwards—Gokhale was then twenty-one—there existed between the two a close association, which had far-reaching effects upon the younger man. Rāṇaḍe was quick to realise the possibilities of Gokhale, and he set himself to develop them. Gokhale always claimed to follow the spirit of Rāṇaḍe. He called him his Guru, would never sit down in his presence, and held him in an almost religious reverence. He taught for about twenty years in the Fergusson College, at Poona, under the Deccan Education Society, working in accordance with the principles of the Society, in a missionary spirit, and for a mere subsistence allowance. Then, in 1902, out of a strong impulse of duty, he gave up teaching, in order, as he declared, "to embark on the stormy and uncertain sea of public life." He became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in that year, and in and through



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that body made his influence felt in quite a remarkable way. Throwing himself with immense vigour and thoroughness into the efforts for India's political, social, and industrial advancement, he soon became the recognised exponent of Indian aspirations. In 1905, he started the *Servants of India Society*, the object of which is to "train national missionaries for the service of India and to promote by all constitutional means the true interests of the Indian people." His long and intimate association with Rāṇaḍe tempered the steel of his mind and character for the great tasks to which he was destined. From Rāṇaḍe he learned to found himself upon realities and to accept the way of hard study, and he imbibed his master's width of view, balance of mind, and moral fervour.

In June of 1885 a banquet was given to Rāṇaḍe by the Poona citizens to celebrate his appointment to the Legislative Council. Some of the speakers on that occasion urged him to give up Government service, and to devote all his time to the popular cause, telling him that he could serve his country better if he were free from all the restraints of an official position. But Rāṇaḍe made it clear that he was not of that opinion. On the other hand, Rāṇaḍe was several times offered high posts in Native States. In 1896, when replying to a third invitation given to him by the Baroda State, he wrote: "In my relation with the British Government, I have always been known as one who, while serving in the post that he has successfully filled, has at the same time never bartered his freedom for any personal consideration." The friends whom Rāṇaḍe consulted had strongly advised him not to accept an appointment in a Native State, because to do so would stop his free expression of opinion.

There are three things that cannot but impress

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themselves upon the mind of anyone who studies Rāṇaḍe's political writings and addresses. These are: (1) his frank recognition of his country's weaknesses, (2) his fearless exposure of Government faults, and (3) his hearty approval of the British connection.

He deplores Indian lack of unity and inability to work harmoniously together for common ends. He deplores the lack of enterprise and perseverance, and the tendency to be too easily elated and too easily depressed. He thought that the people were too prone to shout catch-words of which they did not really understand the significance. Speaking in 1893, he said :

“We bandy about the words freedom and independence, but of their meaning many have no clear idea. Freedom means making laws, levying taxes, imposing punishment, and appointing officials. The true difference between a free country and an unfree one is that in the former before punishment is given a law must have been made; before taxes are levied, consent must be secured; before making a law opinions must have been taken.”

He saw among the people of his day a tendency to turn their eyes too much to the past, and to extol extravagantly and without proportion the days of old. He saw that there was danger of this attitude becoming an opiate, deadening the mind to present duty. He therefore urged the need of hard, self-denying work, in place of mere vapouring about the glorious days of yore. “We should learn to be men, stalwart puritan men, battling for the right, not indifferent nor sanguine, trustful but not elated, serious but not dejected. This is the change in character that has to be accomplished.”<sup>1</sup> Reverence for

<sup>1</sup> Address entitled “The Telang School of Thought,” Bombay, 1895.

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the past, Rānade held, was not in itself a bad thing, quite the contrary, but it must be combined with activity and vigour. He urged also that discrimination ought to be exercised in our homage to the past. The part of India's past which is worthy of all honour is the time when science, literature, and philosophy flourished, and when the Empire of the Indians extended from Java to Mongolia. But the last 1,500 years had brought India to its present evil condition, and Rānade declared that there was no sense in honouring it and no obligation to do so. He said that now and again, during these 1,500 years, gleams of the ancient power and purity had appeared, but in the present the glory had altogether departed. He urged that the men of the present must seek to do their duty with strength of purpose, perseverance, resolution, and joy, and thereby restore to India the greatness that it possessed in the very ancient days. We cannot break with our past altogether, he said, and we should not want to do so, for it is a rich inheritance of which we have no reason to be ashamed. But, while respecting the past, we must ever seek to correct the parasitical growths that have encrusted it, and sucked the life out of it.

With equal faithfulness Rānade dealt with Government actions and policies in his writings and addresses. He criticised the land administration, and indicated what he regarded as better methods; and in a similar way he dealt with many other particular matters. He reviewed very frankly the administrative records of Viceroys and Governors. He felt that the Government in India tended to be too much centralized, and too little adaptable to the varying local circumstances. "One code, one law, one measure, the same taxation, the same routine forms, a fondness for uniformity as an end in itself—this is the besetting sin of the

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administration.”<sup>1</sup> On many an occasion he uttered candid words about the faults into which the members of a ruling race are always prone to fall, and the complete prevalence of which would be fatal to all real advance. His clearest statement on this matter was given at the time of the controversy on the *Ilbert Bill*. This was a Bill introduced in 1883 to give Indian District Magistrates and Sessions Judges the right to try European British subjects, and empowering Local Governments to extend the right to other officials belonging to certain specified classes. The European community was fiercely indignant at the Bill and tried to stampede the Government into abandoning it. Ultimately the Bill was passed, but in an amended form, which substantially whittled down its scope. When the commotion had subsided, Rānaḍe wrote an essay giving a summary of the affair and a statement of his own opinion. He said :

“The educated minority of the native population with their free press, and their associations unconsciously sympathized with by the mass of their countrymen, represent the soul of Indian Liberalism, and their strength lies in the justice of their claim. Arrayed against them are the mighty forces of the official hierarchy, supported by the non-official phalanx of their countrymen here and the great reserve of power and prejudice stored in the large vested interest of their mother country. These are the liberal and conservative forces at work in India. . . . This prejudice and aversion is the native and besetting sin of all conquering races. The Spartan had his Helot, the early Roman patrician had his Plebeian subjects, the later Roman had his Latin and Italian allies, the American and West Indian planter had his Negro and his Chinese settler. In our own country the regenerate castes had the mass of the aboriginal population under their foot and put them down

<sup>1</sup> Speech on Lord Ripon's Local Self-Government Scheme, 1884.

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with a severity which has reacted on themselves with terrible vengeance. The British population in India has arrogated to itself the distinctive position of a superior caste, and history but repeats itself in their cry for power and privilege, and their contempt for the conquered and subject population.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite, however, of his keen consciousness of many defects in the attitude, policies, and actions of the ruling race, Rānade never ceased to be a loyal upholder of the British connection. He discerned a great moral purpose at work in India's long and chequered history. He said :

“I profess implicit faith in two articles of my creed : this country of ours is the true land of promise ; this race of ours is the chosen race. It was not for nothing that God has showered His choicest blessings on this ancient land of Āryāvarta. We can see His hand in history. Above all other countries we inherit a civilization and a religious and social polity which have been allowed to work their own free development on the big theatre of Time. There has been no revolution, and yet the old condition of things has been tending to reform itself by the slow process of assimilation.”<sup>2</sup>

He shows how Buddhism was outlived and conquered by an imbibing of its excellencies and rejecting of its errors. He shows how the Muhammadan repression was outlived, the people emerging all the better for the hardy discipline in suffering that it went through under that domination. Their character was strengthened in directions in which it had been deficient ; their manners and tastes were refined, and they were advanced in many practical accomplishments. But the most lasting benefit of the contact came through the higher tone given to the religion and thoughts of the people. “Caste, idolatry, polytheism, and gross conceptions

<sup>1</sup> See Phatak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे pp. 360 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Speech at the Social Conference, Lahore, 1893.

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of purity and pollution," Rāṇaḍe declares, "were the precise points in which the Muhammadans and the Hindus were most opposed to one another."<sup>1</sup> And he shows that the reforming sects which arose within Hinduism from the fifteenth century onwards "had this general characteristic that they were opposed to these defects in the character of our people." Summing up his philosophy of Indian history, he declares :

"The history of this great country is but a fairy tale, if it has not illustrated how each invasion from abroad has tended to serve as a discipline of the chosen race, and led to the gradual development of the nation to a higher ideal if not of actual facts, at least of potential capabilities. The nation has never been depressed beyond hope of recovery, but after a temporary submerging under the floods of foreign influences, has reared up its head—absorbing all that is best in the alien civilization and polity and religions."<sup>2</sup>

He sees the British connection as the coping stone of this long disciplining process, referring to it as "the discipline afforded us by the example and teaching of the most gifted and free nation in the world, whose rule guarantees to us a long continuance of these favourable conditions."

"Both Hindus and Muhammadans," he said, "lack many of those virtues represented by the love of order and regulated authority. Both are wanting in the love of municipal freedom, in the exercise of virtues necessary for civic life, and in aptitudes for mechanical skill, in the love of science and research, in the love of daring and adventurous discovery, the resolution to master difficulties, and in chivalrous respect for womankind. Neither the old Hindu nor the old Muhammadan civilization was in a condition to train these virtues in a way to bring up the races of India

<sup>1</sup> Speech at the Social Conference, Lucknow, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Allāhābād, 1892.



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on a level with those of Western Europe, and so the work of education had to be renewed, and it has now been going on for the past century and more under the *Pax Britannica* with results—which all of us are witnesses to in ourselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Rānade believed that in God’s providence Britain had been entrusted with a great mission in India. “The sole *rationale* of British rule in India,” he once wrote, “is its capacity and its providential purpose of fostering the political education of the country on the largest scale in civil and public activities.”<sup>2</sup> Even in days of political reaction and of popular disappointment, he held fast to his trust that God’s providence was over all, and that the good sense and innate justice of the British character would acknowledge the rightness of India’s claims. In words bright with the colours of the Old Testament, he pictures the goal whose attainment would be the fulfilment of Britain’s mission and of India’s aspirations :

“With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly to all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and, lastly, with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision ; happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it ; happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Speech at the Social Conference, Lucknow, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> *Sārva-janik Sabhā Journal*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Speech at the Social Conference, Calcutta, 1896.

## IX

### THE ECONOMIST

#### THE PROBLEM OF INDIA'S POVERTY

IN 1890, Rāṇaḍe succeeded in forming the Industrial Association of Western India. He had long wished for something of this nature, as he felt that an industrial movement was necessary to the fruition of the political and social movements. He had begun to take steps in the matter in 1888, opening up the subject to various editors and other prominent men. Hume regarded the idea as excellent, but was doubtful about asking the Congress leaders to shoulder the new burden. Rāṇaḍe therefore decided not to wait for the Congress, but to make an independent start in the Bombay Presidency. He spoke on the project at Āhmednagar in 1888, and in a letter of February, 1889, to Mr. G. V. Joshī he wrote, "I am fully aware of the difficulties of the subject, rendered still more formidable by the want of study of industrial subjects and the absence of teaching in regard to it from those who guide the press, yet the effort has to be made." In another letter to the same gentleman he said: "In these, as in all other matters, I attach more value to the work of educating the public mind to entertain new and solvent ideas."

The first Industrial Conference met at Poona, in 1890, and at it Rāṇaḍe delivered an address entitled, *The*

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*Industrial Conference*, in which he explained the aims of the movement. Besides that introductory address he read a paper on *Netherlands India and the Culture System*. He also read papers at the Industrial Conferences in each of the following three years. In 1892, he delivered at the Deccan College, Poona, his address on *Indian Political Economy*, which has become one of the landmarks in the history of Indian economic thought.

In 1890, the Government's trade policy led to the rise of a *swadeshī* movement, which meant the boycotting of foreign goods and the buying only of goods made in India. Rāṇaḍe was in sympathy with the movement, but was critical of some of its manifestations. He told the Deccan College students, who had opened a *swadeshī* store and who had secured an address from him on behalf of the movement, that the use of machinery must be encouraged and extended, or *swadeshī* would be unlikely to succeed. Rāṇaḍe's conviction that foreign capital was required by India and would do no harm, led to a split in the Industrial Association. Tīlak and Nāmjoshī had asked Rāṇaḍe to refrain from expressing his opinion so as to save the industrial movement from being disrupted. Rāṇaḍe agreed, at the same time extracting the reciprocal condition that the other party should not mention foreign capital. A meeting was held to which Rāṇaḍe had invited some Europeans, and at it some of the "new patriots" blazed out against foreign capitalists. Rāṇaḍe felt that this was neither keeping faith with him nor was it courteous to the meeting's European guests—even although the speeches in question were delivered in the Marāṭhī language. So when his turn came, he explained the advantages of foreign capital. When some of the "new patriots" cried out that Rāṇaḍe had broken his promise, he got very angry and

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spoke some burning words. The wrath visible on his face caused those who were making the clamour to hesitate, and when they saw the distressed appearance of their leaders, they became silent. Rāṇaḍe's hope was to get all races and classes in India to support the Industrial Movement. Just before the break-up of the Conference, he made a very conciliatory speech, but disaffection smouldered in many minds, as could be gathered from the following title of an article that was published in the *Kesari*: "Mahādev, in singing the praises of foreign capital, is a traitor to his country."

When we examine Rāṇaḍe's writings and addresses on economic subjects, we find there one dominating purpose. That purpose is to lay bare the causes of India's deep and widespread poverty, and to impress upon the public the lines along which the solution of that poverty problem is to be found. There is a massiveness of effect about these writings, with their underlying unity of aim and their elaborate historical parallels. His conclusions are based on facts obtained with painstaking care. He aims always at what he thinks to be practicable. His words are courteous even in attack or censure.

The fact of India's poverty, Rāṇaḍe declares to be in no need of demonstration:

"We need only walk through our streets and study the most superficial aspects of our economic situation, and the fact forces itself upon us that we are a people of little resources. Many millions among us scarcely earn a couple of annas a day; many millions more are always underfed and live on the borderland of famine and slow death, into which the failure of a single monsoon precipitates them. Of course this condition of things is not of yesterday and is not the result solely of foreign conquest and competition. It is an old, a very old inheritance. If

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we feel it more keenly now, we feel it because we are being roused from the sleep of ages, and our eyes have learned to see, and our ears have learned to hear.”<sup>1</sup>

With his characteristic dislike of barren controversy, he asserts that the question of India's comparative improvement or decline under foreign rule is a matter of only antiquarian interest, and that the practical question to lay to heart is not the relative, but the absolute poverty and present helplessness of the country generally.

Dependence upon the single resource of agriculture, Rāṇaḍe regards as the chief cause of India's poverty :

“We have been all along, like most ancient nations, more or less exclusively agricultural. But our contact with the world outside, and the freedom of exchange which has resulted in consequence, have produced one most undesirable result. They have aggravated the situation by making us more than ever dependent upon a single and precarious resource. The industry and commerce of the country, such as it was, is passing out of our hands, and, except in the large presidency towns, the country is fed, clothed, warmed, washed, lighted, helped, and comforted generally by a thousand arts and industries in the manipulation of which its sons have every day a decreasing share. Foreign competition, not because it is foreign, but because it is the competition of nature's powers against man's labour—it is the competition of organized skill and science against ignorance and idleness—is transferring the monopoly not only of wealth, but what is more important, of skill, talent, and activity to others.”<sup>2</sup>

“Fifty years ago,” he said, speaking in 1890, “India

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address at the First Industrial Conference, Poona, 1890, p. 173. The page references in this chapter mean the numbers in the volume entitled *Essays on Indian Economics*, Third Edition, 1916. G. A. Natesan & Co.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

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clothed herself with her own manufactures, and now she is clothed by her distant masters," and he shows that the same fate had befallen the industries in wool, silk, oil, and hides. He points also to the huge import of manufactured things like umbrellas, toys, stationery, soap, matches, glass, watches, candles, furniture, leather goods, oils, railway material, machinery, etc. Moreover, he reminds us, the shipping, banking, insurance, freight and commission businesses, and the railways are all foreign monopolies.

The economic danger that has come to India along with the British connection is, according to Rāṇāḍe, the danger of India being reduced more and more to a purely agricultural country. For the British connection has brought India into full contact with the outside world and with the industrial competition of that world—many parts of which are far better equipped than India for the industrial struggle. It has brought railways into India, and also a great stream of foreign capital, enterprise, and skill.

Rāṇāḍe admits that the railway policy has been a considerable success and that, "taken along with the political and military advantages of railway construction, there can be no doubt that the borrowed money has been well laid out." But he goes on to declare that the railways have

"made competition with Europe more hopeless over large areas, and facilitated the conveyance of foreign goods to an extent not otherwise possible. . . . Facilities of communication are certainly desirable advantages, but more desirable still is the capacity to grow higher kinds of produce and develop manufacturing and industrial activities. The sole dependence on agriculture has been the weak point of all Asiatic civilization. Contact with superior races ought certainly to remedy this helplessness, and not to aggravate it, as has been to a large extent the case in this



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country. . . . The railway policy pursued by Government has, as a matter of fact, except in a few presidency towns, killed out local indigenous industries, and made people more helpless than before by increasing their dependence on agriculture as their single resource."<sup>1</sup>

So, too, with the foreign capital, enterprise, and skill, that the British connection has brought in its train, the danger Rāṇāde sees is that these may paralyse indigenous activity. He writes in 1893 :

"The great Indian Dependency has come to be regarded as a plantation, growing raw produce to be shipped by British agents in British ships, to be worked into fabrics by British skill and capital, and to be re-exported to the Dependency by British merchants to their corresponding British firms in India and elsewhere. The development of steam-power and mechanical skill have lent strength to this tendency of the times, and, as one result of the change, the gradual ruralization of this great Dependency, and the rapid decadence of the native manufacture and trade, became distinctly marked."<sup>2</sup>

Lack of capital is another of the causes of India's poverty on which Rāṇāde lays much stress. In a paper on *The Iron Industry: Pioneer Attempts*, which he read in 1892, he showed how in modern times repeated efforts to revive the Indian iron industry had come to grief owing to insufficiency of capital. The difficulty is not merely the absolute lack of capital, but also lack of proper arrangement for bringing available capital into the hands of those who need it and could use it to advantage.

"There is capital to hand waiting secure investment. There is the broad dreary expanse of industry which

<sup>1</sup> "Netherlands India and the Culture System," pp. 83-85.

<sup>2</sup> Paper read at the Industrial Conference, 1893, on "The Present State of Indian Manufactures and the Outlook of the Same," p. 93.

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is thirsting for capital, and offering the most secure investment for its fruitful employment. What is wanting is the necessary skill and patience which will adjust the capacity of the one to the wants of the other, and make both work in a spirit of harmony and co-operation."<sup>1</sup>

Another of the causes of India's poverty that Rāṇaḍe lays bare, is the wretched system of credit, i.e., of money lending, that prevails in the country districts—we have already referred to it in Chapter V when presenting Rāṇaḍe's views on the agrarian problem. Another cause of poverty that he calls attention to is the congestion of population in certain areas, so that the land becomes excessively sub-divided and cannot afford an adequate livelihood to the numbers on it. So you get a surplus agricultural population, whose training has not fitted them for manufacturing occupations even if such existed to absorb them. He also recognizes as causes of the poverty the common lack of the spirit of enterprise, alertness, and ambition, and the fact that Indian social life has not been organized with a view to success in wealth-production.

We may notice in passing that Rāṇaḍe did not lay the blame for India's poverty upon what has come to be called "the drain"—i.e., the yearly payments that are made by India to England for various reasons—on which Dādābhāi Naorojī, Mr. Digby, and many others have laid such stress. In Rāṇaḍe's day that annual tribute amounted to about twenty crores of rupees. But Rāṇaḍe points out that when this is analysed it is seen to consist, partly of interest upon money advanced to, or invested in, India, and that "so far from complaining, we have reason to be thankful that we have a creditor who supplies

<sup>1</sup> Paper on the "Reorganization of Rural Credit in India," read before the Industrial Conference, Poona, 1891, p. 39.

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our needs at such a low rate of interest." Another part "represents the value of stores supplied to us, the like of which we cannot produce here." And as to the rest,—

"The remainder is alleged to be more or less necessary for the purposes of administration, defence, and payment of pensions, and though there is good cause for complaint that it is not all necessary, we should not forget the fact that we are enabled by reason of this British connection to levy an equivalent tribute from China by our opium monopoly."<sup>1</sup>

As well as diagnosing the economic disease, Rāṇaḍe indicates the remedy. Leaving aside his proposals for dealing with the agricultural aspect of the problem by means of a better system of land-tenure, and by means of a more adequate and more helpful arrangement for the lending of capital to the farmers—proposals which we have already examined—and leaving aside palliatives such as emigration;<sup>2</sup> we come to what Rāṇaḍe regarded as the essential requisite for India's economic salvation, and that is the growth of Indian manufactures and commerce.

He gave much thought to the problems involved in the building up of a sound system of manufactures and commerce in India. He said:

"What we have to do is to learn by organized co-operation to compete with the foreigner, and take in as much

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural Address at the First Industrial Conference, Poona, 1890, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> In 1893, Rāṇaḍe wrote a paper entitled, *Indian Foreign Emigration*, in which he thoroughly investigates the whole question, examining the conditions in all the places where Indian coolies were then employed abroad. His conclusion is that, notwithstanding certain disadvantages, "there can be no doubt that the system of protected emigration has, on the whole, been very beneficial."

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raw produce from abroad as we need, and work it up here, and to send in place of our exports of raw produce the same quantities in less bulky but more valuable forms, after they have undergone the operation of art manipulation and afforded occupation to our industrial classes."<sup>1</sup>

He believed that there were solid grounds for expecting success:

"Natural aptitudes, undeveloped but unlimited resources, peace and order, the whole world open to us, our marvellous situation as the emporium of all Asia—these priceless advantages will secure success, if we endeavour to deserve it by striving for it."<sup>2</sup>

Rāṇaḍe persistently preached that Government ought actively to encourage and develop industries in India, and he frequently deplores the State's lack of industrial policy. He makes much of the comparison between Netherlands India and British India in this respect, the gist of his comparison being contained in the statement that "while the proportion of raw to manufactured produce exported from British India was 4 to 1, the proportion in Netherlands India was 1 to 4." His positive proposal is that the State should definitely help in the planting and development of new industries—a policy the principle of which has already been accepted in the action taken with regard to cinchona, tea, and coffee, the State having at great expense "pioneered the way for the introduction of these foreign products among the agricultural resources of the country."<sup>3</sup> Similar efforts, he urges, ought to be made in directions other than that of agricultural development. He does not advocate that the State should itself go in for industrial organisation and management, but says that it should do

<sup>1</sup> "The Present State of Indian Manufactures and the Outlook of the Same," p. 111.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> "Netherlands India and the Culture System," p. 84.

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for industry what it has done in the case of the railways, i.e., guarantee the payment of interest to those who have provided the capital, and subsidise private efforts until private enterprise is able to support itself.

We get a concrete example of what Rānade would like Government to do in his paper on *The Iron Industry: Pioneer Attempts*. When a private company comes forward with a proposal to exploit some of the country's iron resources, the Government should, if the company raises at least 25 lakhs of capital, grant it a long lease of at least 50 years, should lend its officers for surveying and prospecting work and, provided it is satisfied with the character and management of the company, should guarantee a minimum rate of interest during the first trial period. Government should also reserve its right to share in the company's profits when they exceed a fixed minimum. The company should get its land free of cost, on condition that *bona fide* work is done within a given period. No royalties or fines should be charged until after the company begins to earn a definite minimum profit. The factories should also be guaranteed a continuous and certain demand for their produce at fixed prices. There should be set up a separate department of commerce and manufactures for this department of Government activity, and so frequent oscillations of purpose would be avoided. The large enterprises thus started would be limited to places selected by the Government experts as possessing all the advantages of good ore, cheap fuel and flux, easy communications, and conveniently available markets.

One of the great impediments to India's industrial development is the lack of cheap capital ready for investment in large industries. Rānade would have the Government—through the existing Local and Municipal Boards

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or through specially created Corporate Boards of Trade and Commerce—advance loans to private enterprisers at low rates of interest, helping them also in the choice of the industries and in the selection of locations. In doing that Government would naturally choose industries in which it has a large stake, and for which India possesses special advantages, and he mentions iron, coal, sugar, oils, woollens, tanning, paper, glass, and beer. Rāṇaḍe believed that if his industrial policy were adopted and properly carried out it would change the whole face of the country in a few years, and “the present paralysis would give way to a play of energies which would far more effectively than schools and colleges give a new birth to the activities of the nation.”<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe felt that the measures required for the industrial regeneration of India were rejected because those in authority regarded them as conflicting with certain universal and unescapeable laws of political economy. The orthodox political economy—whose typical representative was J. S. Mill—had so gripped the mind of England that reverence for *laissez-faire* had become an essential dogma of the true economic faith. Rāṇaḍe felt that, consciously or unconsciously, the minds of India's rulers were always determined by the fear of offending against that dogma. It was the main premise of all the arguments which disinclined their minds to agree with his proposals for the cure of India's economic maladies. Accordingly, in the lecture on *Indian Political Economy*, which he delivered in 1892, he set himself to show that the opposition has its root in such a conception of the teachings of political economy as economic thought has now long outgrown.

<sup>1</sup> “Netherlands India and the Culture System,” p. 91.



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He shows that the earlier writers regarded political economy as a science of abstract truths like physics or astronomy. They did not sufficiently realise that their theories did not deal with men as they actually exist. They made a number of assumptions which they took to be universally true and applicable to all times and all places. So far as these assumptions are approximately true of any society, they can furnish valid explanations of its economical statics, though even then, Rāṇāḍe insists, they would afford no suggestion as to its dynamical progress or development. But the assumptions are literally true of no existing society, and in a society like that existing in India, they have hardly any validity at all. Rāṇāḍe says,

“With us an average individual man is, to a large extent, the very antipodes of the economical man. The family and the caste are more powerful than the individual in determining his position in life. Self-interest in the shape of the desire of wealth is not absent, but it is not the only nor principal motive. The pursuit of wealth is not the only ideal aimed at. There is neither the desire nor the aptitude for free and unlimited competition except within certain predetermined grooves or groups. Custom and State regulation are far more powerful than competition, and status far more decisive in its influence than contract. Neither capital nor labour is mobile and enterprising and intelligent enough to shift from place to place. Wages and profit are fixed, and not elastic and responsive to change of circumstances. Population follows its own law, being cut down by disease and famine, while production is almost stationary, the bumper harvest of one year being needed to provide against the uncertainties of alternate bad seasons. In a society so constituted, the tendencies assumed as axiomatic are not only inoperative but are actually deflected from their proper direction. You might as well talk of the tendency of mountains to be washed into the sea, or of the valleys to fill up, or of the sun to get cold, as reasons

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for our practical conduct within a measureable distance of time."<sup>1</sup>

He then gives a brief sketch of the history of economic science, in order to show how, in the hundred years since Adam Smith, the claim of political economy to teach a universal and dogmatic truth had been seriously questioned in England itself, as well as elsewhere. He hopes that he has made clear the following important change which has taken place in economic thought since the days of Ricardo and Mill:

"The nature of the subject itself as a branch of social science, which is best studied historically and not deductively, the actual practice of the most civilised nations, and the history of the growth of its theory, alike establish the doctrine of relativity, and the predominant claim of collective welfare over individual interests, as the principal features in which the highest minds of the present day chiefly differ from the economical writers of the old school, with their *a priori* conclusions based on individual self-interest and unrestricted competition."<sup>2</sup>

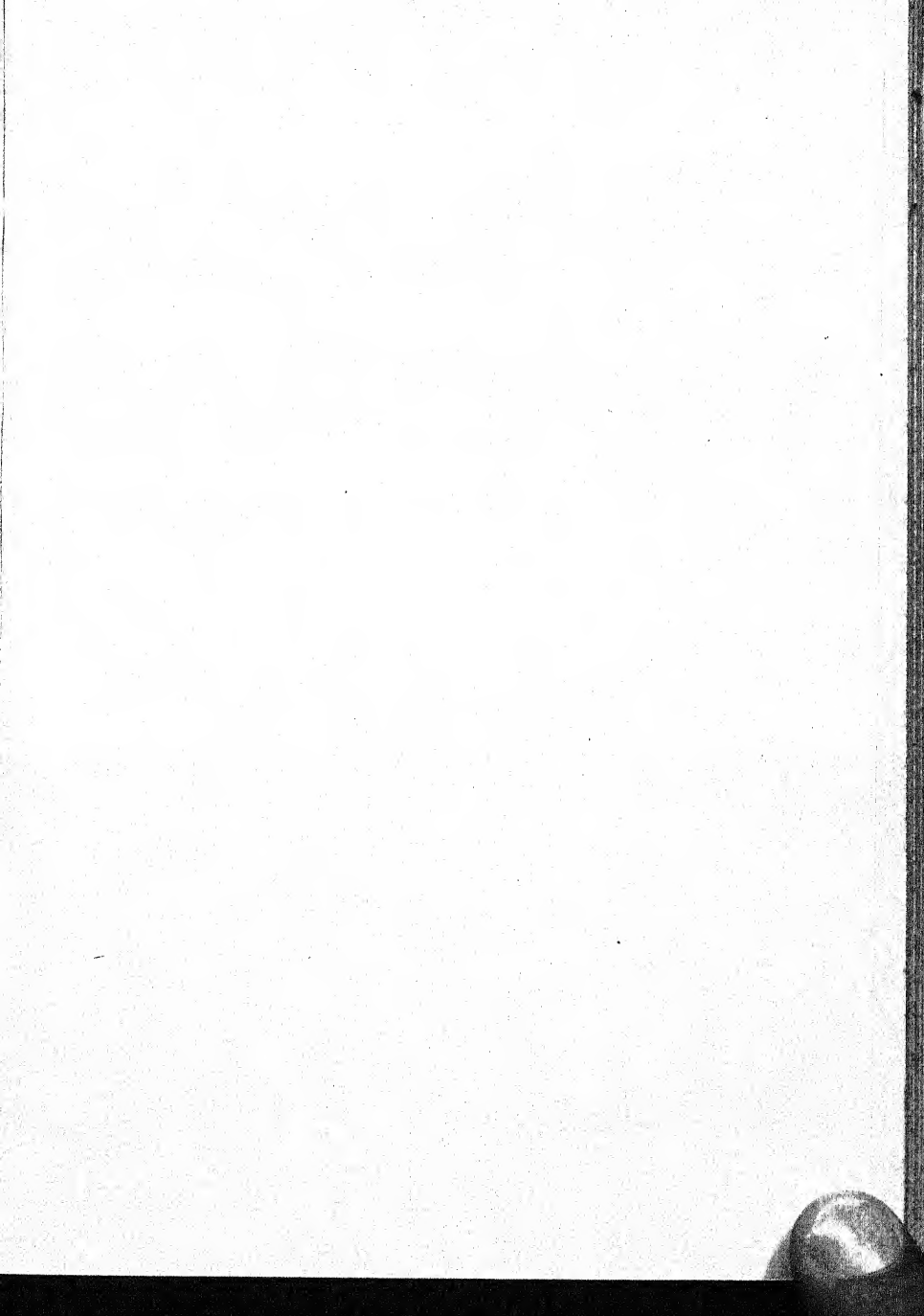
Having shown that the dogmas which were exalted on high by the older economists, and which seemed to exert such a paralysing influence upon the authorities in India, were no longer regarded as universally applicable and finally authoritative by the exponents of economic science, Rāṇāde draws the conclusion that they should no longer be allowed to stand in the way of the adoption of these measures of reform which he holds to be the remedy for India's economic troubles. The dogma of the territorial division of labour should not be allowed to confine India to the production of raw materials and to bar the way to

<sup>1</sup> "Indian Political Economy," pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

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the development of a varied industry. The dogma of *laissez-faire* ought no longer to be allowed to prevent the adoption of bold measures of immigration and colonization, nor to prevent whole-hearted Government action for the development of industrial enterprise of various kinds. The dogma of unearned increment as the leading feature of the law of rent should no longer be allowed to dominate the Government's land-revenue policy. Finally, the dogma that confines the State's function to the maintenance of law and order ought no longer to be allowed to stand in the way of the State "taking care of national needs in all matters in which individual and co-operative efforts are not likely to be so effective and economical as national effort."





MRS. RAMĀBĀĪ RĀṆAḌE

## X

### PERSONAL, DOMESTIC, AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

WE must now gather together some of the facts and incidents that help us to picture Rāṇaḍe's personal and domestic life. His wife had progressed well with her Marāṭhī education, and she evinced a desire to go on to learn English. Rāṇaḍe was both surprised and delighted, and said that that very idea had been in his mind for some time. English was accordingly started, and during the stay at Nāsik the second English Reader was finished, and Rāṇaḍe set her to read the New Testament. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, in her *Recollections*, tells us how her husband used to take the lesson which she had prepared the previous day. First of all he would test her spelling and her knowledge of the meaning of the words, and then he would ask her to read the passage. If she could not do it, he would be angry. But his anger, she tells us, was not like that of most people. There was no loud exclaiming, no harsh speaking. He would sit dull and sad and heave a deep sigh ; and that condition would last a long time. His was not the wrath of impulse, that comes and goes as quickly as it came. He would never get angry for slight matters, but when anger came to him it lasted long. Therefore his wife used to do her utmost to avoid the occurrence of such occasions, for it distressed her to see him so saddened.



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Ramābāi's keenness to learn, and her endeavour to make herself a fitting wife for Rānade, brought her into disfavour with the other women of the household—amounting, usually, to eight or nine persons of more or less near relationship. She was subjected to many bitter remarks and to much harassing attention. When Rānade went on his first tour under the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, he left her at home, and arranged that Miss Hurford, who was in charge of the Female Training College, should come to the house each day to carry on her English education. This caused great indignation among the women, and they insisted on Ramābāi not only changing her dress but also bathing after touching the foreigner, otherwise she must dine by herself in her own room. When, in 1882, Ramābāi, at her husband's instigation, read an address in English, at a public meeting called to advance the project for starting a Girls' High School in Poona, there was a great outcry in the household. Though Rānade knew well what went on, and though he was the head of the house, he did not rebuke the elder women nor try to suppress their stupid conduct. He bade his wife do what they told her without talking back to them, and urged her never to show them rudeness or stubbornness. His counsels might have been modelled upon the maxim, "the meek shall inherit the earth."<sup>1</sup> His aim seemed to be to build up in her the same enduring yet independent spirit that he himself possessed. For he had the power of receiving abuse and misunderstanding without bitterness and yet without deviating from his chosen course. Only his wife, of all the members of Rānade's large household, really understood and sympathized with his spirit. The strain on heart and will due to

<sup>1</sup> The Gospel according to St. Matthew, chap. v, verse 5.

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such a condition of domestic life is well brought out in a passage from a letter to Malabārī which Rāṇaḍe wrote in 1884 :

“People find fault with us, even abuse us, for half-heartedness, for our apparent want of fire and enthusiasm. God only knows that in our households we are perpetually at war with our nearest and dearest. We struggle and strive to do our best, and have perforce to stop at many points, when we fear the strain will cause a rupture.”

In 1886, Rāṇaḍe, accompanied by his wife, was staying for some time at Calcutta, in connection with the work of the Finance Committee. One evening shortly after their arrival they were sitting in the garden of their bungalow, when a man came in with some Bengali newspapers. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe told him that they did not want one as they could not read Bengali. Rāṇaḍe said, “We’ll take it seeing that you have brought it, and you can start delivering it regularly next Monday.” When the man had departed, he said to his wife, “I would be ashamed to say that I did not know the language of a town in which I am to stay for three or four months.” Ramābāī, being aware that Rāṇaḍe only knew the letters and that he could not read Bengali well, said rather roguishly, “Well, if you think that I ought to learn it, teach me yourself. I am willing. Only I won’t be taught by anyone but you.” Rāṇaḍe, though not annoyed, took the matter seriously and said nothing. Next day he came home late in the evening, accompanied by a sepoy carrying a bundle of Bengali books. It was the first time in all his life that Ramābāī had known him to do his own bazar. He tried to read several of the books, but as it was a long time since he had studied the language, he had forgotten it. So he said to the sepoy, “While I am at dinner go to the bazar and buy a slate and pencil, and

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don't waste any time." After dinner he practised the letters on the slate, and, dropping his customary light-heartedness, bent all his attention to the task of learning to read. When they went out for their drive that evening, Rāṇaḍe told his wife that his daily work had been left undone because all his time had been taken up with reading Bengali. Next morning he started her off on the letters of the alphabet, and in the evening he was hard at it again, holding a book in his hand while he was being shaved, reading aloud and asking the barber the proper pronunciations. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe declares that she felt very remorseful when she saw all the trouble that she had caused. She had demanded that he should teach her, only to postpone having to learn. If she had simply said that she was willing to learn, he would have engaged a Bengali master for her, but she did not like that idea because since childhood she had known no school, and she had never been taught by any man except her husband. She told her husband in admiration that he was the prince of gurus. Whereas the custom was for those who learn from a guru first to serve him, he had been serving her, making time amid his busy and responsible life to learn the language in order to teach it to her. The result was that after a month or so she was able to read Bengali well.<sup>1</sup>

When the transfer to Nāsik took place, in 1878, Mrs. Rāṇaḍe found herself for the first time in independent control of her husband's household. For a month and a half after they went there, they were unable to get a cook, and in her *Reminiscences* Mrs. Rāṇaḍe dwells humourously on the difficulties that arose owing to her inexperience in the culinary art, and owing to her lack of handiness at needle-

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आठवणी pp. 170-4.

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work. But she assures us that her husband never got angry nor scolded—not even when she forgot the salt nor when she put it in twice. Realizing that her cookery troubles arose largely from the fact that she had to stumble along on the method of trial and error, Rāṇaḍe one day came home with a cookery book that he had bought. He told her that now she would enjoy a quiet mind ; all she had to do was to read the book carefully and each day make one thing according to the directions, measuring the quantities exactly. As regards the household finance, it was Rāṇaḍe's custom not to handle the money himself but to leave it all in his wife's keeping. She, however, never spent five rupees beyond the amount allotted for the monthly expenses of the household without asking her husband's permission. But their financial relations were always happy, for whenever she asked sanction for an increased expenditure, he always at once said, "Yes."<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe was very accessible to people who wanted to see him. His house, as is often the case with Hindu establishments, did not make for perfect privacy. But he had schooled himself to concentrate his mind and to ignore the noise of children, the coming and going of servants, and the clamour of neighbours. He was always glad to get in touch with promising young men, and strove to find out their abilities, and to utilise them in the cause of social reform. A method he often employed for getting rid of undesirables or for testing sincerity and ability was to ask the person to make a summary for him of some dull Government Blue-book.

Rāṇaḍe had a forgiving nature. Gokhale tells of a conversation that he heard between him and another leader of

<sup>1</sup> See आठवणी pp. 76-77.

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the Prārthanā Samāj, concerning how to deal with some repentant back-slider. While the outlook of the other man was that of stern law, Rāṇaḍe's was that of the merciful Gospel. He was all for letting the offender have another chance.

Rāṇaḍe was devoid of self-conceit and was unusually indifferent to abuse. When Mr. Māṅkar first approached him regarding the writing of his life, he did all he could to dissuade him from the task, and urged him to write a history of the times instead. When some one started to read an eulogising article about him, he would stop him and say, "There is no need to read that, let me rather hear what my critics are saying." Once Ṭīlak delivered a thundering attack on him at a committee meeting. Everyone expected that Rāṇaḍe would reply with angry passion. But after Ṭīlak had finished, he just said, "Baḷwant, come and sit beside me. I am not infallible. I shall explain myself to you. Then you can tell me exactly what is wrong and I shall try to put myself right." It has been said by some that Rāṇaḍe's meekness was due to a lack of fire and virility in his nature. But there is evidence that in his younger days he had a hasty temper which he mastered. When he felt in hot passion, he used to shut himself up alone in his room, until he felt calmed.

In Rāṇaḍe's writings one finds little or nothing of the spice of humour and, indeed, his mind, preoccupied with serious subjects, seems usually to have been serious in its tone. But he knew how to laugh too, and there were times when in the intimate company of his compeers his voice was raised in hearty peels of merriment. We may conclude, too, that he was not devoid of humour from what Mrs. Rāṇaḍe tells us of the light-hearted banter that he used to display in the family circle at the hours of ease, and of the



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delight he took in the playful mimicry with which one of his little nieces used to amuse the family.

His conversation had an attractiveness arising from his wide reading, including newspapers and periodicals, and from his personal knowledge of men and affairs. The bigness of his mind brought those with whom he talked under the spell of lively and illuminating ideas. Moreover, he was free from the fault of abusing or ascribing false motives to people who differed from him, and if that sort of thing appeared in a company where he was present, it got no encouragement from him. He was naturally reserved but would open out to a person once a subject had been started, and if he saw that the person was really interested.

Rāṇaḍe had a deep, clear voice, and he was a lucid speaker, but he could not be called an orator. He did not electrify. He had nothing of the fiery force of a Gladstone or a Surendranāth Bānnerjī. Yet he could hold an audience so that it listened with rapt attention, and he could also move it to deep feeling. While speaking he used no gesticulation, but maintained the same stolid attitude, often with one hand resting on the table and rubbing his eye with the other. Malabārī tells of Rāṇaḍe beginning a speech in a cold and indolent sort of way, with faltering hesitation, so that you might have thought that he was just arguing with himself. But very soon his mind became warm and agile under the influence of the ideas he was developing, and then—like a motor-car whose engine has become warmed up—he swept off with a flow of lucid ideas clothed in ready words, carrying his hearers with him. The elements of his power as a speaker are probably to be found in his clearness of mind, his knowledge, his independence and sincerity, a certain loftiness of word and thought, and the power he had of setting things in a new light,



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Rāṇaḍe took no exercise of an athletic sort. It was however his custom, when the weather was good and when he had the leisure, to take a walk of four or five miles in the morning or in the evening. On these walks he was generally accompanied by two or three friends, and they would discuss the questions of the day as they went. Except for an occasional game of chess or *songatya*, he had no recreations. If he felt that he needed diversion, he found it in the study of some other subject than the one that was then occupying his mind. As Mr Phāṭak puts it, from political economy he would turn to philosophy, from philosophy to politics, from politics to social philosophy, and if all these lost relish he would find beguilement in his beloved history books.<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe's mind does not seem to have been particularly open to impression by natural scenery. Mr. Phāṭak maintains that Rāṇaḍe was not blind to the charms of nature, and points in evidence to descriptions of natural scenery in his writings and speeches, and explains any apparent indifference by the fact that when Rāṇaḍe's mind was busy with some thought he tended to lose consciousness of his surroundings, including his companions as well as the scenery. But the descriptions referred to would seem to be common-places of illustration rather than the ebullitions of a nature lover, and his very reflectiveness and constant absorption in social ideas would make nature lose her power over him by losing his attention.

As to dramatic art, there is record of a visit that Rāṇaḍe once made to a play. But it seems that he went only to please his friends. Music and drama did not appeal to him. What did impress him in music was the technical skill

<sup>1</sup> Phāṭak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 287.

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required in its production. He also appreciated the value of music as an aid to religious devotion, and he had singing introduced into the services of the Prārthanā Samāj. He was acquainted with the plays of Shakespeare and with the novels of Sir Walter Scott, and he had a special fondness for Emerson in reading whose works the right method was, he said, to take a few sentences and go out for a walk pondering over their meaning.

Rāṇaḍe's habits were temperate, though he took snuff profusely. While at work he was fond of chewing almonds or betel-nut. He liked pungent, well-spiced, crisp food, and he liked to have fresh fruit after meals. It is said of him, however, that he was never restive if these things were not forthcoming.

His manner of life was simple. He did not seek to imitate the Europeans in dress and in ways of living. People who called to see him, would find him seated on a rug, writing with a reed pen, the paper supported on his thigh or on a low desk—and he would probably be humming one of Tukārām's hymns. Reform consists in turning your heart in the right direction and not in any mere change of outward things—that was his rendering of the cry of the ancient prophet, "Rend your heart and not your garments."<sup>1</sup> He was very careless of appearances. We are told how he used to sit at the National Congress meetings near the Chairman, and if not interested in the discussion would be absorbed in a book, keeping it close to his eyes, and he would unconcernedly turn a pencil in his ear from time to time. Once when asked why he wore such rough, old-time, khaddar clothes, he replied that he would continue to do so until his country could produce finer stuff.

<sup>1</sup> The Book of the Prophet Joel, chap. ii, verse 13.

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If not handsome, Rāṇaḍe was imposing, with his stout, tall body and unusual head. His forehead was very high and his nose was very small in proportion to the size of his face. His skin was fair, and there was an alert liveliness about his expression. His upper lip and mouth were concealed by a bushy, protruding moustache. His right eye was almost useless for seeing, and his left eye was never quite sound, though it held out to the end ; his hearing, too, was latterly defective. Sir Stanley Reed has given us an interesting glimpse of Rāṇaḍe as he saw him in 1897 :

"Mr. Rāṇaḍe was a man notoriously indifferent to appearances. His physique was rugged, with one drooping and watery eye. He dressed in anything, just a long black coat, frayed linen projecting from the sleeves, short, ill-cut white trousers. He presided over the Social Conference, and I can see him now as he appeared on the platform, leaning on a knotted stick, standing in silent thought for near ten minutes, completely indifferent to his audience. Then he began, slowly at first, gradually warming to his subject, and spoke for an hour and a half on the Golden Age of India. Without a note, without a pause, he poured forth a stream of learning and sound sense, holding his audience enthralled though he had none of the art of the orator. . . . It made it easy to understand the unseen influence he exercised on the best minds with which he was brought into contact."<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe's inner religious life was a very real thing, and lay at the very core of his personality. His deepest ideas easily expressed themselves in a religious form, and his heart was constantly aglow with the warm emotion of religious thoughts. A demonstration of the presence and power of religious faith could affect him deeply. For example one day, in 1882, he was sitting reading in the

<sup>1</sup> Article entitled, "My First Year in India," *The Times of India Annual*, 1925.

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Poona Library, when a procession of pilgrims passed by on their way to Viṭhobā's shrine, bearing with them a palanquin on which were moulds of the footprints of Dnyānoba and Tukārām.<sup>1</sup> Attracted by the sound of the pilgrims' songs he looked out and, as he called the attention of a friend who was with him, his voice was thick with emotion and his eyes were filled with tears.

Mr. V. M. Mahājānī, in his *Recollections*, says that Rāṇaḍe's root quality—or one might say the root of all his other qualities—was his single-hearted devotion to God, and he mentions a statement which Rāṇaḍe once made to the effect that he constantly felt as if God were speaking at one end of a long tube, at the other end of which he was listening.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Nārāyaṇ Chandāwarkar tells how once, after the controversy on social reform had started, and people were abusing Rāṇaḍe for introducing discord and unhappiness into the homes of the community, a Parsee friend said to Rāṇaḍe, "Mādhavrāo, give up the religious reform. What obstacle is there apart from the religious one? There is plenty to do in the world without it." But Rāṇaḍe replied, "This is the land of religion. Be it for good or for evil, we cannot do without religion. Religious thoughts are in our blood. If we try to flee from it, it will pursue us."

He had a strong belief in God's providential care. This belief reveals itself not only in the way he traces God's hand in the wide field of history but also with regard to matters of individual and personal concern. When he lay at the point of death in 1891, and when his wife bearing alone,

<sup>1</sup> See *Life and Teaching of Tukārām* by Fraser and Edwards, p. 48, for a description of this custom.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Phāṭak in न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 548.

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in an isolated place, the burden of the crisis, burst into tears at his bedside, he said,—“Don’t fear. God is with you.” In 1895, when they were coming back from Mahābaleśwar, Rānaḍe had a narrow escape from treading on a couple of scorpions. The incident somewhat upset Mrs. Rānaḍe who imagined what would have happened had he been stung out there away from all help. But Rānaḍe told her that she ought to see from the incident that God is constantly near us, and takes care of us step by step; and he urged her to realise how true are the words that Tukārām in his *abhaṅg*<sup>1</sup> addresses to God, “Where I go there Thou art, holding the goer’s hand.”

Rānaḍe had a rich inner life of prayer and meditation. In 1891, when the proposal was being strongly urged that the name of the Prārthanā (i.e., Prayer) Samāj should be changed to *Brāhmo* Samāj, he opposed it. He declared that a Society which held that prayer was the chief duty of man and the means of attaining God, ought to call itself the Prayer Society. It is interesting to know that when Rānaḍe stood up to deliver an address, he was accustomed to remain for some minutes fixed in thought with his eyes shut. Few of his audience were aware that what he was then doing was concentrating his mind in an act of prayer.

Mrs. Rānaḍe in her book gives us many an intimate glimpse of her husband’s inner religious life. He would rise shortly before dawn and start chanting religious verses of the Marāṭhī poet-saints, especially those of Tukārām. As he hummed them over, absorbed in the meaning of the words, Ramābāi would often notice what she calls a “light of a Divine quality” steal over his face.

<sup>1</sup> Abhaṅg is the Marāṭhī name for a hymn or lyrical poem. An abhaṅg often consists of two or four lines, but may have thirty or even more.



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Sometimes Ramābāi assisted at these early morning devotions. She would take a book in her hand and begin to read, and then Rāṇaḍe would start singing the verses, or immersed in the poet's thoughts he would simply listen, accompanying the reading with snaps of his finger, or with beating of his hands. If the passage was one that he particularly liked, he would get Ramābāi to repeat it again and again, and lost in the thought of the verses, he would sit swaying from side to side. Then, Ramābāi tells us, Rāṇaḍe's face would be suffused with a warm glow of Divine love, and his mind would be flooded with happiness. And oftentimes the strength of the emotion that the verses induced would melt him to tears. As for herself on these occasions, she tells us that a great feeling of love and veneration for Rāṇaḍe would well up within her. Besides the sentiment of love for an earthly husband, she found herself responding to the presence in him of an uplifting Divine power.

Sometimes Rāṇaḍe would absent-mindedly land himself in difficulties on the musical side, applying metres that did not fit the particular verses. But he would forge unconcernedly on, and when Ramābāi laughed at him for it and suggested that she must write down these new musical modes that he was inventing, he would reply, "We are but artless folk and not expert in rhythm, time, and tune, but that does not matter. He for whom we sing our hymns understands them all, and He pays no attention to our deficiencies of execution."<sup>1</sup>

The habit of beginning the day with religious devotions was so ingrained in Rāṇaḍe that it asserted itself on unlikely occasions. In 1897, G. K. Gokhale was travelling back

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आठवणी p. 213.



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with him by train from the Amrāotī Conference and they were the only occupants of their compartment. "At about 4 a.m.," says Gokhale, "I was suddenly roused by some singing in the carriage, and, on opening my eyes, I saw Mr. Rāṇaḍe sitting up and singing two abhaṅgs of Tukārām again and again, and striking his hands together by way of accompaniment. The voice was by no means musical, but the fervour with which he was singing was so great that I felt thrilled through and through and I, too, could not help sitting up and listening." The abhaṅgs were: "He who befriends the weary and the persecuted he is a true saint and God Himself is to be found there;" and "Be you humble and seek the favour of the saints. If you want to meet God, this is an easy way."<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe's tender-heartedness showed itself practically in many ways and, especially, in the concern that he showed for persons who were in trouble. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe tells us that if any member of the family circle or any servant of the house were ill, he would at once visit them in their room, and would tell her to call a doctor and to look after the treatment personally. Moreover until the person recovered he would never omit to inquire, at meal times, how he was getting on.

When the plague first came to Bombay, in 1896, there was great consternation. Rats were found coming out of the Rāṇaḍe's granary and wash-house and dying in the garden. They did not learn until some days after that this was an indication of danger and that the house should be abandoned. Thereupon they at once went off to Loṇāvlā, and afterwards got a bungalow at Bhāṇḍup. Several of the servants took plague and three of them died. It is almost

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of Gopāl Kṛishṇa Gokhale*, p. 783.

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amusing, but for the tragic nature of the circumstances, to read Mrs. Rāṇaḍe's account of how she schemed and arranged so that distressing facts should not come to her husband's ears, or should come at the *end* of his meal or *after* he had enjoyed a night's rest. She knew that his tender-hearted concern was apt to lead him into attempting things which, with his inexperience of household affairs, were quixotic, and were best left to others. Before they departed from Bombay, the cook's son fell suspiciously ill, and Mrs. Rāṇaḍe declares that if her husband had got to know of it before they had left he would not have gone to Loṇāvlā, and not only that, but she felt sure that, if at the moment when the boy was being taken away to hospital, his mother had tearfully besought Rāṇaḍe, he would, without caring about the infectious nature of the disease, have said, "Don't send the poor child to hospital, let him stay in the house."<sup>1</sup>

The quality of Rāṇaḍe's inner life can also be gathered from the impression that he made upon people who came into close personal contact with him. Gokhale asserts that "it is no exaggeration to say that younger men who came in personal contact with him felt as in a holy presence, not only uttering nothing base, but afraid even of thinking unworthy thoughts, while in his company."<sup>2</sup>

Another indication of the important place that religion held in Rāṇaḍe's life is to be found in the fact that any attempt to banish it from the scheme of things roused him to strong and, sometimes, heated antagonism. In an article written, in 1882, and entitled, "Note on Professor Selby's Published Notes of Lectures on Butler's Analogy and Sermons,"<sup>3</sup> he takes the writer, then a Professor in the

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आठवणी pp. 219-37.

<sup>2</sup> *Speeches of Gopāl Krishna Gokhale*, p. 781.

<sup>3</sup> *Sārvaṇik Sabhā Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 3.

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Deccan College, severely to task for endeavouring to land us on

“the dreary alternative of agnosticism, which the young students are taught to accept as the final word of science on the grave mysteries of life and thought, and man’s hopes of personal communion with God are laughed away to make room for an inane faith in evolution, and the law of collective development and progress. . . . Hindu students especially need the strengthening influence which faith in God, and in Conscience as His voice in the human heart, alone can give. The national mind cannot rest in agnosticism. The experiment was tried once on a large scale by the greatest moral teacher of this or any other age. The failure of Buddhism is a warning that such teaching can have no hold on the national thought.”

In 1885, a scene took place which again reveals Rāṇaḍe in the light of a champion of religion. It was at the Deccan College Annual Gathering, and the Chairman, Dr. Bhandārkar, in the course of a plea for the culture of religion urged that purity of heart was impossible without it. Āgarkar, objecting to this, hotly declared that strength is frittered away by religious discussion, and maintained that religion is no essential part of culture. Tīlak vigorously supported Āgarkar. Rāṇaḍe intervened in the debate, trying to calm the passions that had been roused, and also trying to impress on his hearers the importance of religion. He declared that religion was the speciality of India, which would never follow agnostic teachings like those of Mill, Spencer, and Sidgwick. He deeply regretted, however, that some Indians had imprinted their teachings on their minds, forgetful of the fact that if there is anything dearer than life to India, it is religion. Instead of soothing the passion Rāṇaḍe’s words inflamed it, and his speech was delivered under a cross-fire of sneering remarks.

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At the end he asked pardon if he had done wrong, but declared that if what he had said had the effect of making his hearers realise the importance of religion, he did not regret his hard words.

As a religious reformer Rāṇaḍe was far removed from the position of orthodox Hinduism, and condemned many of its beliefs and practices. He was a student of the Bible, and in many points his view of God and the world coincided with the Christian view. The tone and the colour of his inner religious life have much resemblance to that of the evangelical Christian. He himself seems to have realised this similarity, for he once said :

“All the love that in Christian lands circles round the life and death of Christ Jesus has been in India freely poured upon the intense realisation of the everyday presence of the Supreme God in the heart in a way more convincing than eyes or ears or the sense of touch can realise. This constitutes the glory of the saints and it is a possession which is treasured up by our people, high and low, men and women, as a solace in life beyond all value.”<sup>1</sup>

His ethical outlook and practice were so markedly Christian in their tendency, that the old theologians would undoubtedly have dubbed him an example of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*. He always maintained, however, that he was a Hindu, and asserted that the Prārthanā Samāj, having rid the system of the false excrescences of ages, represented the true Hinduism. Idolatry, untouchability, and the modern caste distinctions he declared to be such excrescences.

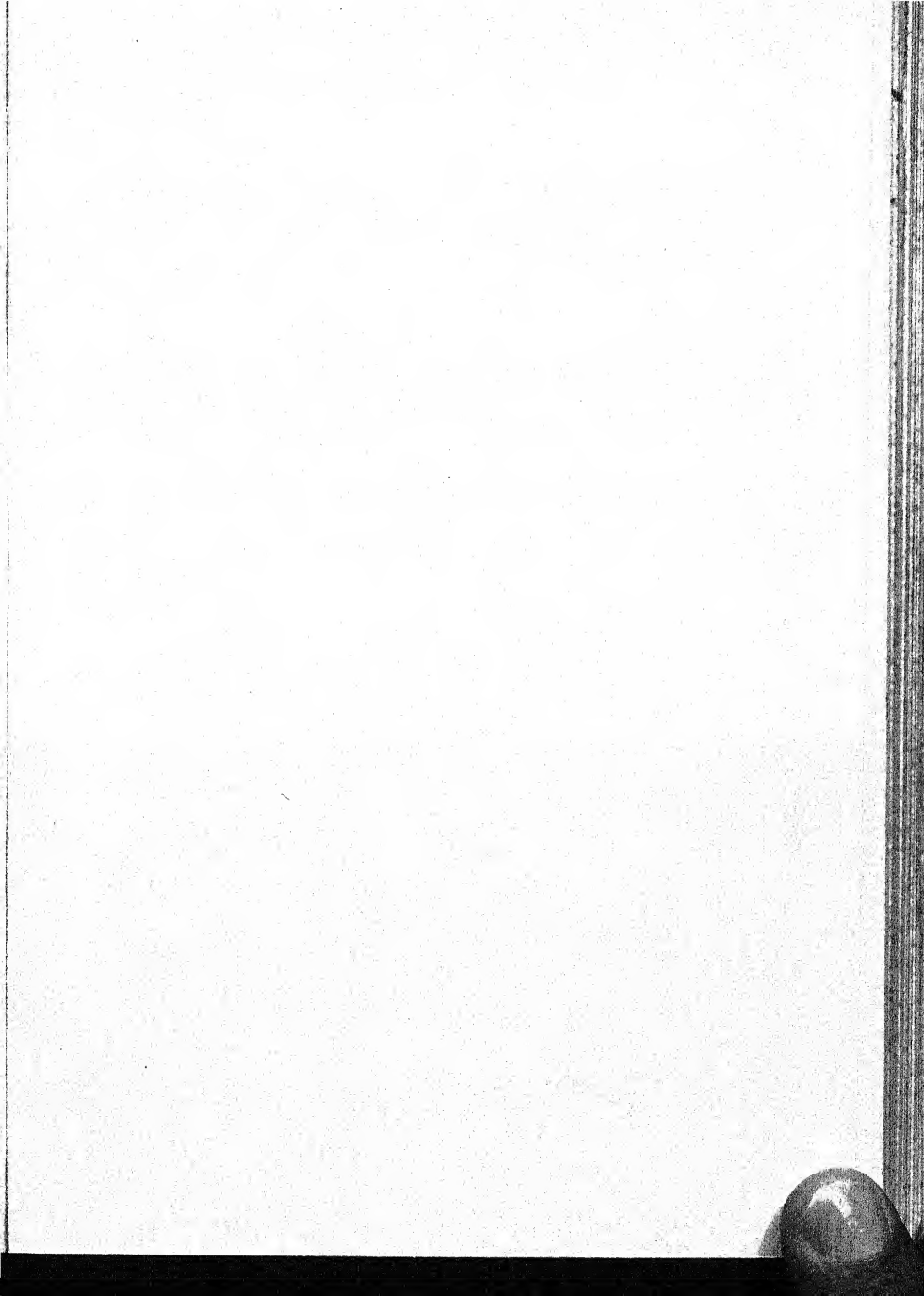
When occasion offered Rāṇaḍe would enter the lists on behalf of his renovated Hindu creed as against Christianity. In September, 1891, Dr. Pentecost delivered a series of

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the Marāṭhā Power*, p. 167.

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fifteen lectures on Christianity in the Ānandobhāv Theatre, at Poona. He was an attractive speaker and great crowds attended his addresses. Rāṇaḍe accepted the task of proposing a vote of thanks to him at the last meeting. Dr. Pentecost's address took about three-quarters of an hour, and then Rāṇaḍe rose to move the vote of thanks, and himself spoke for a longer period. He apparently felt that an answer from the point of view of Hinduism was called for, and in a speech that touched on the Greek, Roman, Jewish, Christian, and Musalman religions, and the sects of Hinduism up to the Vaiṣṇavite saints, he sought to give that answer. We are told that people went away saying, "This gem of learning belongs not merely to the Brāhman class and to Poona city, but to all India"; and asking, "Who is to be called the true people's leader, if not Rāṇaḍe?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Phāṭak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 480.







RÂNÂDE AND HIS FELLOW-JUDGES OF THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT

## XI

### BOMBAY, 1893-1900

#### HIGH COURT JUDGE: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FAITH SHOWING ITSELF IN WORKS

**D**URING the first weeks after his return to Bombay as a judge of the High Court, Rāṇaḍe had to undergo another series of receptions, banquets, and congratulatory addresses, similar to that from which he had escaped at Poona, for many people were immensely proud of him, and were eager to show their joy at his elevation. He took his seat on the bench of the High Court on 23rd November, 1893.

A judge's position, from the nature of the case, gives little or no scope for the display of originality and for personal powers of leadership. If Rāṇaḍe's life had been entirely devoted to his legal career he would, doubtless, with his big and adaptable intellect, have become a very eminent man in his profession. But it was his activities in other lines that have given him a niche in the palace of fame, and we need not try to pursue in any detail his dealings with the matters of law. During his seven years on the High Court Bench he worthily filled the position, as is made abundantly clear by the words of men who came into close contact with him in his legal work. Chief Justice Sir Laurence Jenkins referred to him as a "profound and sympathetic judge possessed of the highest perceptive

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faculties, and inspired with an intense desire to do right. His opinion was of the greatest value to his colleagues, and his decisions will stand in the future as a monument of his erudition and learning."<sup>1</sup>

The impression we gather is that his name will stand, not, perhaps, among the most profound and brilliant of India's lawyers, but certainly as a judge who did well the work to which he was called. It has been suggested that Rāṇaḍe "had small predilection for purely juristic pursuits and he made no pretence to the profundity and breadth of knowledge of Hindu law which made his old friend and fellow-worker, Mr. Justice Telang, an ornament of the Bombay Bench. Perhaps his long experience as a Special Judge charged with the administration of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, which aimed almost as much at the avoidance, as at the application of technical rules, had a good deal to do with this."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, he showed great power in the unravelling of difficult cases, and maintained to the end that reputation for ability which he had earned as a Subordinate Judge.

It may hardly seem necessary to remark upon his impartiality, but in a country like India where race-feeling and class-prejudice can enter in at so many points, that quality requires to be specially strong. It is therefore worth while mentioning that when, as in 1893, cases arising out of the Hindu-Muslim friction came before him, there never was any suspicion that the fact of his being a Hindu would influence his judgment. Nor again, in 1897, when the events following the murder of two Europeans at

<sup>1</sup> *The Times of India*, 18th January, 1901—report of the first sitting of the High Court after Rāṇaḍe's death.

<sup>2</sup> See the leading article on Rāṇaḍe in *The Times of India*, 19th January, 1901

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Poona caused great popular commotion, and when he had to deal with appeals arising therefrom, was he in the least swayed by the passions and prejudices that were moving the masses.

One of the things that impressed people most about Rāṇaḍe's court work was the amount of care that he bestowed on his cases. When an appeal came before him from a lower court, he used to read over at home all the papers connected with the case, and he would not admit for hearing any appeal which obviously deserved to be summarily dismissed and which would only cause an unnecessary waste of time and money. This manner of dealing with appeals was not common among the Judges, and of course it involved a great deal of labour. Moreover, it made Rāṇaḍe somewhat unpopular with the junior members of the Bar, who were not too pleased at seeing the file of the High Court cut down in this way.

Having read over the relevant papers at home, Rāṇaḍe formed a provisional opinion on a case, *pro* or *con*, before the hearing, but he held this opinion always fluid and open to change in the course of the hearing. He talked very little on the Bench, but listened carefully to the arguments and then decided as he thought right. He used to bring home with him at the week-ends a great load of books, and would spend much time consulting them in connection with his judgments.

A considerable amount of discretion was left to the Judges of the High Court when they had to give decisions regarding matters affecting the Hindu family. For the law which controlled that part of Indian life was not systematized like the Penal Code or the Criminal Procedure Code. Decisions were made in accordance with the texts of the Hindu scriptures, coupled with the

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guidance of certain British legal principles where justice required some departure from these texts. It is said that the Bombay High Court has done most in the way of liberalising Hindu Law—e.g., in the matter of the recognition of the rights of women—and Rāṇaḍe played an important part in that improvement. His judgments, one writer has declared, are like learned essays on Hindu society being based on consideration of the Śruti-Smṛiti, the Purāṇās, History, and the most important English judgments.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Rāṇaḍe gives us a glimpse of her husband's daily routine at this period. Awaking shortly after 3 o'clock, he would lie meditating upon God until 4 o'clock. Then from 4 to 5, he would sit up in bed and sing with heart-felt devotion abhangs of Tukārām and of Nāmdev. Then he would recite some Sanskrit psalms, and at 5-30 would get out of bed. He would then perform the morning ablutions, and by 6 o'clock would be seated on his sofa in the drawing-room, ready to start work. He first read the telegrams in the daily newspapers and then looked at his mail. At 9-30 he went to have his bath, and after that took his breakfast, at the end of which he would sit talking for an hour or so. Then he would dress himself, and, about 10-30 set off in his carriage for the Court. The Court sat from 11 to 5 o'clock, with a tiffin interval in the middle. One of the servants of the house used to take a hot tiffin to Rāṇaḍe each day, and when he had partaken of that refreshment and drunk some water, he used to take a short rest in his easy chair before starting work again. When the Court finished at 5 o'clock, he used to take exercise by walking two or three miles, his carriage pro-

<sup>1</sup> Phāṭak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 517.



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ceeding alongside of him. When he came home at 6 o'clock, he would sit talking for half an hour, and then settle again to work, answering letters and reading. Rāṇaḍe was an exemplary correspondent and made a point of answering letters on the same day as he received them. As he was consulted by all sorts of people his mail was a large one—on an average about 20 letters a day—and his careful attention to it involved much constant labour. After the evening meal, he used to examine the studies of the children of the household. Then he would sit talking for an hour or so with the older folk, and after that would go upstairs to bed, where he would read until he fell asleep at half past ten or eleven. On holidays, in the morning and sometimes also in the afternoon, numbers of people used to come to visit him. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe often laughed to herself at the skill with which her husband found out what they were good for, stimulated their enthusiasm, worked upon their patriotism, their vanity, or their ambition, and harnessed them to his schemes for the advancement of India's welfare.<sup>1</sup>

After coming to Bombay as High Court Judge, Rāṇaḍe's work for social reform went on as vigorously as ever. He attended and spoke at the annual Social Conferences, and stimulated, organised, and directed the whole movement. We have indicated above, in Chapter VII, the principles that he elaborated in various addresses and papers during this period, and we shall now content ourselves with drawing attention to a few incidents which help us to see Rāṇaḍe's social reform activity in its more personal bearings.

In January, 1894, the Bombay Brāhmins entertained

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आठवणी pp. 212-5.



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Rāṇaḍe at a *pānsupārī* party in honour of his elevation to the Bench of the High Court. From the speeches made on that occasion Rāṇaḍe saw that the source of gratification lay in the fact that he was of Brāhman birth. So when the time came for him to make reply, he developed the thesis that Brāhmanhood depends not upon birth but upon qualities. The real Brāhman, he said, is the man whose character shows self-control, energy, austerity, purity, restraint of the senses, and other high qualities. To call any other sort of man a Brāhman was, he declared, to make a jest of the name. Don't look to a man's caste, he told them; it is not birth that is to be venerated but qualities of character; and whosoever has the qualities to him the respect ought to be paid. Many of Rāṇaḍe's hearers found those words far from agreeable, and strong dissent against them was voiced in the paper called *Native Opinion*.

At the end of 1894, Rāṇaḍe and a number of others were returning from attending the Congress and Conference at Madras. He and Dr. Bhandārkar occupied a first class carriage, and the rest of the party were in a second class. When the train reached Sholāpūr and Rāṇaḍe had gone to talk with his friends in the other carriage, a young European civilian, then an Assistant Judge, looking for a compartment to travel in, and seeing a place that suited him occupied by an Indian's bedding, threw it down and usurped the place. Rāṇaḍe hearing what had happened, quietly went back to his carriage, and without remonstrating, sat down on the other seat with Dr. Bhandārkar. "When the hour for sleeping came," says Mr. Gokhale, who was himself one of the passengers, "Dr. Bhandārkar, as the lighter of the two, took the upper berth, and gave his own seat to Rāṇaḍe. On arriving at Poona, the

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Englishman somehow came to know that the gentleman whom he had insulted was Mr. Rāṇaḍe, Judge of the High Court, and it appeared that he wanted to apologize to Mr. Rāṇaḍe. Mr. Rāṇaḍe, however, on seeing him come towards him, simply turned his back on him and walked away.”<sup>1</sup>

It is instructive to notice the reaction of Rāṇaḍe's mind to this incident. The refusal to allow the offender the chance of apologizing is puzzling, but might be due to a feeling that the real sting of the rudeness and contempt was not removed by an expression of repentance which came only after learning that the insulted individual was a person of high position. For there would be no recognition in such an apology of the wrongness of racial prejudice, and nothing in it to heal the wound inflicted upon Rāṇaḍe's *Indian* consciousness. But, perhaps, the most revealing thing about Rāṇaḍe's reaction is his readiness to take note of “the beam” in his people's own eye. On the day following the incident, Gokhale asked him if he intended to take any steps in the matter, and he replied,

“I don't believe in those things. It will only be a case of statement against statement, and, in any case, it is not worth fighting about. Moreover, is our own conscience clear in these matters? How do we treat members of the depressed classes—our own countrymen—even in these days? At a time when they, and we, must all work hand in hand for our common country, we are not prepared to give up the privileges of our old ascendancy, and we persist in keeping them down-trodden. How can we, then, with a clear conscience, blame members of the ruling race who treat us with contempt? No doubt incidents like this are deeply painful and humiliating, and they try one's faith sorely. But the best use to which we can put even

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of Gopāl Kṛishṇa Gokhale*, p. 776.

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these unpleasant incidents is to grow more earnest and persistent in the work that lies before us.”<sup>1</sup>

Rāṇaḍe’s conduct apparently made a deep impression on the young Englishman. For about five years afterwards he wrote Rāṇaḍe a letter from Europe, and in it, after praising his patience and expressing hearty respect, he said, “You have taught me a lesson in gentlemanliness.”<sup>2</sup>

One of Gāṇdhī’s great aims is to remove from India the reproach that is upon her because of her treatment of the depressed classes. Gokhale was Gāṇdhī’s political guru, and Rāṇaḍe was Gokhale’s. It is a great succession, and both the disciples learned Rāṇaḍe’s way of turning the searchlight *inwards* as well as outwards. Once Gāṇdhī came to Rāṇaḍe and consulted him on the problem raised by the treatment that Indians were receiving in South Africa. Rāṇaḍe while condemning that treatment, used it as a mirror in which the young man might see reflected an evil thing that existed in the life of his own people. They ought not to treat us that way, he said, but do not forget to consider, too, how we treat our own brethren of the depressed classes.

The Tīlak party made great efforts to prevent the 1895 Social Conference from being held in the Congress maṇḍap. There was a fierce controversy, and much bitter feeling—which once or twice threatened violence—was aroused. The dispute was rather childish and much pettiness of spirit was shown, though doubtless Tīlak himself was standing for a principle, desiring as he did to draw into the Congress as large a portion of the public as possible,

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of Gopāl Krishṇa Gokhale*, p. 776.

<sup>2</sup> See Phātak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 539, and D. G. Vaidya’s Memoir in धर्मपर व्याख्यानै Third Edition, p. 17.

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irrespective of their attitude to social reform, and fearing that the association of the Congress with the Social Conference would tend to restrict the support of Congress (i.e., the political movement) to those who were also social reformers. In the end the Congress Committee gave permission for the holding of the Conference in the Congress maṇḍap. But thereupon Rānade, to the astonishment and also in some cases to the annoyance of his followers, said, "We don't want it now, to accept it after what has happened would be like committing the sin of striking a dead body." He, therefore, persuaded his friends to have a separate maṇḍap erected in the compound of the Fergusson College and the Conference meetings were held there. He, himself, delivered two addresses, which were attended by large crowds. It is said that some individuals came with the idea of creating a disturbance, but the flow of Rānade's healing, conciliatory words seems to have disarmed them of their hostile intention. At the close of his second address he said :

"We have above all to learn what it is to bear and forbear—to bear ridicule, insults, even personal injuries at times, and forbear from returning abuse for abuse. In the words of the Prophet of Nazareth, we have to take up the cross, not because it is pleasant to be persecuted, but because the pain and injury are as nothing by the side of the principle for which they are endured."

Then he concluded by reminding his hearers of the fundamental unity which underlies all the differences that spring from the weaknesses of the human temperament and the errors of the human judgment :

"It is the mind which, after all, holds intercourse with other minds, and there is a basis of union in the common divine element present in all of us, which is the spirit which

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binds together all men in a common bond of love and help. The waters of the heaven get their colour from the soil over which they flow; but after all these colours are not the water, they may conflict with one another for a time, but in the end they meet and flow in one pure stream into the great ocean, leaving the earth and the mud and the silt behind them. If we only work in this faith, the opposition to reform, which so much disturbs us at times, will only be an incentive to more sustained efforts."

It had been decided to hold the 1899 Conference at Lucknow, but when the time drew near the local representatives grew pessimistic about the possibility of carrying it through, and the cancelling of the Conference was prevented only because of Rānade's influence with the Congress local leaders, who agreed to take on the burden of arranging for the Social Conference delegates. When Rānade and his Bombay friends, who had come from the plague area, reached Lucknow, they had to go to the quarantine hut. But as the weather was extremely cold and as Rānade's health was not good, some friends arranged to bring him up to more comfortable quarters in the city. When, however, they came to fetch him, they found that he was entirely unwilling to leave his friends at the hut and himself go to better accommodation, and though these friends urged him to go, he stoutly refused.

During his last years in Bombay, Rānade continued his many sided activity, encouraging the healthy growth of the patriotic spirit, and persevering with the endeavour to plant in the public mind ideas which would be the seeds of a worthy and vigorous public life. He had revived the Cold Season Lectures of the Bombay Union Club, which had fallen away after the death of Telang. He could not himself be present so regularly as he had been at the Poona Spring Lectures, but he attended whenever possible, and

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his intimate knowledge of men and affairs made him a valuable asset to the Society. Shortly after coming to Bombay, he wrote a series of articles on "Decentralisation," and he also gave practical proof of his continued interest in the encouragement of Marāṭhī Literature. In 1896, after some hesitation, he gave his approval to the formation of the Deccan Sabhā at Poona. It was a counter move against the Ṭīlak Party, which had obtained control of the Sārva-janik Sabhā. They were averse to doing anything themselves for social reform, and were determined to put obstacles in the way of others doing anything. They were extremist in their tendency, and inclined to "run after the impossible." The founding of the Deccan Sabhā gave definiteness to the division in the political movement which, since the rise of Ṭīlak, had, year after year, been growing more evident. Henceforward there was a Moderate party and an Extremist party. Rāṇaḍe, to the distress of his friends and disciples, was hotly abused for allowing the new Sabhā to come into existence.

A notice which Rāṇaḍe published at the time of the formation of the Deccan Sabhā is of much interest as an expression of his political philosophy, and also because it gave currency in India to the now well-known words, *liberal* and *moderate*. He wrote:

"The spirit of liberalism implies freedom from race and creed prejudices and a steady devotion to all that seeks to do justice between man and man, giving to the rulers the loyalty that is due to the law they are bound to administer, but securing at the same time to the ruled the equality which is their right under the law. Moderation implies the condition of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals but striving each day to take the next step in order of natural growth, by doing the work that lies nearest to the hand in a spirit of com-



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promise and fairness. After all, political activities are chiefly of value, not for the particular results achieved, but for the process of political education which is secured by exciting interest in public matters and promoting the self-respect and self-reliance of citizenship. This is no doubt a slow process but all growth of new habits must be slow to be real."

## XII

### PREACHER AND THEOLOGIAN

ALL the years that he lived in Bombay as High Court Judge, Rāṇaḍe was closely associated with the Prārthanā Samāj in that city. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe tells us that no matter at what awkward hour and with how little notice the Secretary of the Samāj called on him to conduct a service, he would never refuse. Opportunity for religious thought and exposition was very dear to him. His power as a preacher and his gift for public prayer must have been very considerable. Gokhale's testimony was that he had never heard anything richer than some of Rāṇaḍe's sermons, and Mrs. Rāṇaḍe declared that as soon as the flow of her husband's love-laden and soothing voice began, the deeps of her heart would well up, her mind would become intent, and in a moment worldly sorrow would be forgotten and hope and faith would find an entrance. Sometimes, she further declared, we really felt as if we were experiencing the very bliss of heaven and, moreover, the bright religious thoughts awakened in us would live in our minds long after the service was over.<sup>1</sup> Before beginning his sermon, Rāṇaḍe used to close his eyes, in prayerful meditation, for a few moments, and often his tears would then begin to flow. It is said that some sense of God would break upon the heart of the most hardened who watched Rāṇaḍe's face at such a time.

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. Rāṇaḍe's introduction to the collection of her husband's sermons entitled, धर्मपर व्याख्यानें.

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As a preacher he avoided the dulness of too much abstraction. He tried to make his addresses edifying, profitable for life's everyday difficulties and problems. He used to go to the Bible for his texts but after coming to Bombay he generally based his sermons on the Eknāthī Bhāgvat, Tukārām, Dnyāneśwar, Nāmdev, Rāmdās, the Bhagavadgita, or the Upanishads. He was censured by Hindu papers for making use of the Bible and, on the other hand, Christian papers and his fellow-Samājists found fault with some of his actions as being inconsistent with his professed Theism. He was, for example, criticised for going to the Thākūrdwār temple to deliver addresses on Tukārām, Eknāth, and Rāmdās, and for going like a pilgrim to Paṇḍharpūr and Ālandi. But Rānade was willing to go to an idolatrous temple or anywhere else, where he would get a chance of explaining his ideas. "Mr. Rānade," says Gokhale, "thought that the discourses were everything—the place where they were delivered was nothing. He wanted his ideas to reach his countrymen and he had no objection to going wherever they were assembled, provided he got an opportunity to speak to them."<sup>1</sup>

Rānade was a theologian—as was inevitable for a man possessing his richness of inner religious life and his keenness of intellect. He was a convinced Theist. In his "Philosophy of Indian Theism,"<sup>2</sup> he vigorously propounds the Theistic interpretation of the universe as against materialism, egoism, pantheism, and agnosticism. We can find no trace of any important changes or development in his religious thought. His position is substantially the same in his "Theist's Confession of Faith" written in 1872,

<sup>1</sup> *Speeches of Gopāl Krishna Gokhale*, p. 773.

<sup>2</sup> An Address delivered at the Wilson College, Bombay, in 1896.

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in his "Review of Dādobā Pāṇḍurang's Reflections on the Works of Swedenborg" written in 1879, and in his "Philosophy of Indian Theism" which he wrote in 1896. Realising the limitations of the human intellect, he is not distressed by the discovery that certain problems—such as those of the origin of the world and man, the relation between God and the created universe, and the relation between mind and matter—are insoluble. Nor is he embarrassed when he has to acknowledge that on many other matters—such as the origin of physical and moral evil, the imperfect liberty that man has, and the question of the pre-existence of the soul and its precise destination—we must be involved in perplexing doubts that cannot be set at rest. His practical cast of mind leaves him undisturbed in the presence of insoluble problems that are merely speculative, and as regards matters that have a direct bearing upon life and conduct, he holds, like Kant and Butler, that we can have a strong moral conviction which is sufficient for the purposes of life and eternity. In religion, to use Browning's words, we have a "reach that exceeds our grasp" and many of our deepest tenets are incapable of explicit proof. "All the proof we can attain to in religious matters," he says, "is that of practical moral conviction." We may have certitude, even though we cannot have demonstration. "It is just possible that practical or moral conviction is all that is needed and therefore attainable by the human mind in its search after the Absolute, and in that case the demand for logical proof may itself be an unreasonable demand."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Philosophy of Indian Theism," p. 15. The page references in the case of the "Philosophy of Indian Theism" and "A Theist's Confession of Faith" are to the volume entitled *Religious and Social Reform*. Gopal Narayan & Co., 1902.

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One feels in Rāṇaḍe's theology the presence of a strong element of the *will to believe*. He shows a pragmatic readiness to accept the goodness of the results as a proof that an idea is true. He is ready to let the practical consequences have the last word, as when he says, "Belief in the moral government of a Perfect Being, and in the immortality of the soul have made civilised man what he is at present found to be, and whatever may be the case with a few great thinkers, mankind generally can only be saved by this saving faith."<sup>1</sup>

His theology reveals a mind comfortably adjusted to the Infinite, and that at a high level. It is competent, practical, optimistic, modestly agnostic regarding the more speculative issues, and wedded to commonsense. He has been called a "practical mystic," and that label may stand if we define his mysticism as the warmth of emotion accompanying a vivid realisation that man's moral and spiritual life is based upon, and companioned by, the great Eternal One who is the source of all things.

We shall now go on to examine the views which Rāṇaḍe put forward regarding the nature of God and regarding God's relation to man—the two fundamental matters in any theology. The place where these views are found most explicitly expressed is in his essay entitled "A Theist's Confession of Faith."

God is the Power *beyond* which controls man and the world of matter. This Power is One. "There are not many gods, nor a hierarchy of gods, nor deified good and bad powers, nor principles of light and darkness, of matter and spirit, of Prakṛiti or Māyā and Puruṣa. God is One

<sup>1</sup> "Note on Professor Selby's Published Notes of Lectures on Butler's Analogy and Sermons," *Sārvaśāstrīk Sābhā Journal*, 1882.

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and without a second and not many persons—not a triad, nor a duality of persons.”<sup>1</sup> God is a Living Being or Spirit, and He is the Supreme Being. He is the Cause of all causes. He is Unconditioned in time and space. He is the Supreme Ruler of the universe which is regulated by His providence. His influence is immanent everywhere in the universe of matter, and His influence is the “essence and the life of the human soul in its nobler aspirations and workings.” This Being is the absolute object of reverence, faith, and love. He is pre-eminent in power, wisdom, goodness, love, justice, and holiness. He is the Lord, Father, Judge, and Moral Governor of all human souls.

For a certain length we can follow Rāṇaḍe’s argument without question. The acknowledgment of the existence of *some Power behind* all the world’s phenomena is inevitable, and philosophic reflection is likely to bring us to the conclusion that this Power must be *One* and not many. Furthermore we may readily agree that this Power cannot be merely another phenomenon among the rest of phenomena, but must be the Ultimate Cause, the Unconditioned, the Supreme Ruler. But when Rāṇaḍe asserts that this Power is the absolute object of reverence, faith, and love, and that It is pre-eminent in wisdom, goodness, love, justice, and holiness, we feel that we must say to him,—This is not so obvious: what evidence have you that these are in actual fact attributes of God?

Rāṇaḍe would reply by inviting us to consider the revelation of God’s character that is to be found in external nature, in the inner world of man’s mind, in human history, and in the activities of those exceptional human beings whom we call prophets, poets, great preachers, philosophers,

<sup>1</sup> “A Theist’s Confession of Faith,” p. 263.



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and martyrs. Consider therefore these means of God's self-revelation:

(1) External Nature. When we contemplate the immeasurable might of the forces that operate in Nature, we cannot but conclude that the Author of Nature is a Being pre-eminent in power; and when we think how in Nature means are adapted to ends, and matter made to perform an innumerable variety of complex functions—then we cannot but conclude that the Author of Nature is a Being pre-eminent in wisdom. But external Nature affords no unambiguous and compelling weight of evidence that the Author of Nature is pre-eminent in goodness, love, justice, and holiness. Indeed much of its evidence seems to point the other way, and to the sensitive soul "nature red in tooth and claw" appears to "shriek against the creed" of love, and goodness, and justice, and holiness.

(2) The Inner World of Man's Mind. This is a vague phrase, but it seems to amount to this, that the voice of conscience, the urge towards perfection, the human aspirations after goodness and truth, all reveal the Ultimate Power as a Being in whom these things can find satisfaction. They show, that is to say, that the Ultimate Power is a Being which is commensurate with and sympathetic with the aspirations of the human heart, the dictates of conscience, and the urge towards perfection. But can we assert that because deep in the mind of man there is the voice of conscience with its standard of moral perfection, and because there are in man's heart yearnings after purity, and holiness, and love, that *therefore* the Ultimate Power is perfect in goodness, justice, holiness, and love, and so is the absolute object of reverence, faith, and love? Huxley used to maintain that we cannot attribute to God these qualities of human aspiration. He saw man's inner life of morality and goodness as a forlorn

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effort to oppose the cosmic tendency. It was a hopeless attempt to go in a direction contrary to the general stream, and had no support in anything outside of human nature. But surely Rāṇaḍe is right. A stream cannot rise higher than its source. The ideals and aspirations that come to birth in human nature must have their root in the Power which made man. Therefore the human soul can dimly perceive that the Ultimate Power is a sheltering presence, and holding out a groping hand can feel the strengthening help of the Divine hand—and such indeed, as we see from his Sermons, was Rāṇaḍe's attitude towards God. If it were objected that, on the other hand, the existence of cruelty and vice in human nature could be cited to prove that God must be cruel and vicious, the reply would be that the two things are not on the same footing, because in *the inner world of man's mind* the judgment of conscience *approves* the one set of qualities and *condemns* the other set.

(3) Human History. Rāṇaḍe had a whole-hearted belief in Providence. He had no doubt that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs." In many an address he traced the moral ends that had been and that were being subserved by the events of Indian history. He delights to point out how ideals of social justice had widened and improved, how old evil customs had been left behind, and how truer ideas of God had gradually been reached. He sees in it all what he calls "the guiding hand of God in History." His argument from history is that we can see certain clear tendencies in the evolution of the race—a progress towards light and truth, towards greater freedom and purity. These tendencies are directed by God, and therefore the nature of the tendencies reveals the character of God. "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-

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hew them how we will,"<sup>1</sup> and the nature of the ends reveals the character of the Divinity.

For some people however the contemplation of history affords no such indication of a beneficent, holy, and loving God. There is, for example, a terrible passage in one of George Gissing's books<sup>2</sup>, in which he says :

"If historic tomes had a voice, it would sound as one long moan of anguish. Think steadfastly of the past, and one sees that only by defect of imaginative power can any man endure to dwell with it. History is a nightmare of horrors—make real to yourself the vision of every blood-stained page—stand in the presence of the ravening conqueror, the savage tyrant—tread the stones of the dungeon and of the torture room—feel the fire of the stake—hear the cries of that multitude that no man can number, the victims of calamity, of oppression, of fierce injustice in its myriad forms, in every land, in every age, and what joy have you of your historic reading?"

Now it is true that Rāṇaḍe was a robust optimist and that he tended always to see the *glory in the grey*. But he had read history widely and deeply, and though he did not emphasise its darker side, that was not because he simply ignored it. His position was really that of all earnest-minded thinkers who, while not blind to the dark side of history, yet find in it a revelation of a holy and loving God. Such thinkers have, somehow, become convinced that God is Himself engaged in the struggle to turn the dark into the light, the evil into the good; that God Himself suffers with His world, and that, somehow, He is the life, the strength, and the support of those whose hearts are pained with the world's sorrow, and who give themselves for its salvation.

<sup>1</sup> *Hamlet*, Act v, Sc. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, pp. 249-50.

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This is conspicuously true of Christianity. The Crucifixion of Christ would, perhaps, be the blackest item in all the indictment that we could make of history. Yet it is precisely at that point of history that the greatest power has been discovered for the uplift of mankind, for the refining of man's moral sensibility, and at the same time for reconciling man to God in such a way as to make him sure that God is his holy and loving Father, in Whose companionship he can live in the world as a son, confident, whatever befall, that all things work together for good. There is indeed a Christian agnosticism which acknowledges the mystery surrounding human life and destiny, but it is, as G. K. Chesterton has put it, a mystery that, because of the fact of Christ, is not dark but *bright*. The note of triumph in Christianity comes from the discovery that the pain and sorrow of the world reach to the very heart of God who redeems through the power of the Cross. Its optimism is so strong just because it has plumbed the depth of pessimism.

In Rāṇaḍe's theology we do not feel that concrete and definite assurance of *Immanuel*, "God with us," which is the vital centre of Christianity. Nevertheless, we do find in it a similar sort of assurance, but in a form that is more diffused and more vague. The theme running through the nine sermons in which he expounded the Path of Bhakti is that God is a God of grace, and that by means of loving faith man can enter into the blessedness of God's companionship, and be victorious over life's evils and life's troubles. From a study of his *Religious Addresses*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The धर्मपर व्याख्याने are a collection of Rāṇaḍe's religious addresses, delivered for the most part at the Prārthanā Samāj services. The collection consists of 46 addresses, and includes the series on

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we get the idea that the experience of God is strictly correlated to loving faith. God is a helpful, beneficent Power whose comfort and strength are ever at the service of the poor in spirit—the humble, the ignorant, the sinful, and the weak. He sends into the world saints and prophets who are able to impart to men that living knowledge of God which is the chiefest of all needs, and who are able to beget in men's hearts that loving devotion to God which brings release and salvation. Rānāde is willing to admit that there are two other ways by which salvation may be obtained—the Way of Knowledge (i.e., becoming equipped with the required philosophic insight) and the Way of Works (i.e., enduring of austerities, observance of ritual, making of gifts, going on pilgrimages, etc.). But he practically denies the validity of these other Ways, when he asserts that they are open only to a few exceptional individuals, and when he shows their extreme difficulty, and the immense stretch of time that they require, and how apt the follower of them is to become puffed up and to be deficient in love. The great merit of the *Bhakti Path*, on the other hand, is that it is simple and easy and, therefore, it is the Way most suited to the needs of weak, ignorant, and sinful mortals. Along that path the seeker finds God quickly and surely, and it is a

Bhāgwat Dharma or the Path of Bhakti, sermons on "Heaven and Hell," "Casting Our Burden on God and Carrying on Our Work," "Purity of Heart," "The Commandments," "Why Do We Sin?" "Comparison of the Present Age and the Age of Luther," "Is there any Need for the Prārthanā Samāj?" "Hinduism and Christianity," "The Spirit of the Age," etc., and addresses on the lives of Dnyāneśwar, Rāmdās, Eknāth, and Rām Mohan Roy. The whole collection gives an intimate view of Rānāde's personal religion, and of his application of his religious beliefs.



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Way that is equally open to everyone—be the person man or woman, Brāhman or Śūdra. Rāṇaḍe taught that the Bhāgwat Dharma with its Path of Bhakti is the essence of true Hinduism, and that that essence had been preserved in the Vaishnava Sects through many vicissitudes of thousands of years. The Prārthanā Samāj, he declared to be the true descendant of the Bhāgwat Dharma.

(4) Prophets, Seers, and Heroes. Rāṇaḍe's conception of this fourth means of God's self-revelation has already been indicated in what we have said in the previous paragraph regarding the saints and prophets. He says :

"When favoured souls in all times and countries are born, inspired with a prophet's vision, a poet's fire, or a great preacher's eloquence, a philosopher's wisdom, or a martyr's self-surrender, then the vision and the fire and the eloquence and the wisdom and the heroism are Divine, i.e., special gifts of God, and what these favoured men see, feel, and teach, and their whole life, are a special sort of a higher and a truer revelation in the only tenable sense of the word. All other book revelations are now mere reflections, and being, as a matter of course, local and temporary, their value is only relative and provisional."<sup>1</sup>

According to Rāṇaḍe incarnation or actual assumption of human flesh by the Divine Spirit is both an unnecessary and an incredible supposition. His assertion is that the saints and prophets are favoured men upon whom God has shed His influence with bountiful abundance, and these men, so exalted, incarnate God's *influence*. Ordinary folk can open their heart to that influence and, by absorbing the thoughts of prophet and saint, and cherishing their spirit of devotion, can experience their vision and enter into their peace.

Rāṇaḍe's position, involving, as it does, the mediation of

<sup>1</sup> "A Theist's Confession of Faith," p. 272.



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God's grace through human personalities, invites comparison with Christianity. For Christian theology asserts that in a unique way the grace of God has been imparted through Jesus Christ. It sees in Christ one who, in terms of human life, perfectly expressed God. It sees in Christ one who so perfectly incarnated the influence of God that fellowship with him begets in the soul a faith that opens up God's full and unhindered companionship. Rāṇaḍe's general conception of God's grace is similar to the Christian conception, but, though he very willingly acknowledges that Christ's life is a revelation of God, he does not take the step that Christian theology has taken regarding Christ's supremacy. Nevertheless, we think that this step is not incompatible with his general position. The years to come will decide the issue by the method of "taste and see," for the claim to supremacy will be weighed in the scales of that other line of revelation which Rāṇaḍe calls "the inner world of man's mind." There may be in revelation a point of sublimation at which God has drawn peculiarly near to mankind and answered the deepest longing of the soul. The proof of that would be found in the response of the universal heart of man. It is a question of fact: is there a religious figure who brings fulfilment of the spiritual yearnings and of the urgent moral ideal of the human soul; is there one through whom there shines so full and bright a light that men become sure of God as Holy and Loving, and because of whom they are able to face life with the confidence of sons in the Father's universe? Christian theology declares with assurance that there is one such supreme figure, namely, Christ. Rāṇaḍe asserts, but with less definiteness, that that fulfilment and that blessedness are attainable by the human soul chiefly through opening mind and heart to the influence of prophets and saints.

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So much for Rāṇaḍe's view of the nature of God. Let us now see what he thought about the important matter of the relation between God and man. He asserts that man is entirely dependent upon God. But he guards against the submergence of real human individuality, and against making man mere helpless clay in the hands of the Potter, by adding two other statements: (1) the human soul is not identical with God, but has a distinct though subordinate existence; and (2) man's dependence upon God does not destroy the possession by man of "a measure of free agency sufficient to fix the responsibility of his acts on him, and to enable him to attain by effort self-conquest."

Theologians have often asserted that, in relation to God, man is a free personal being, and yet in their discussion of the soul's salvation have really denied human personality and freedom. All religions in some way regard salvation as a gift from God. But if God is regarded as imparting salvation by magic means, or by an impersonal transference of merit, or by ways that usurp the functions of man's rational and moral personality, then man does not stand to God in the relation of a personal, moral being.<sup>1</sup>

It is one of the chief merits of Rāṇaḍe's theology that he conceives God's action upon human souls in such a way that God treats man always as a *person* and never merely as a thing. He defines salvation in the following words:

"When the human soul, tried and purified by self-government and resignation, acquires habits which enable it, while in the body, or on leaving the body, to escape its trammels and its lusts, to enter into more intimate

<sup>1</sup> See John Oman's *Grace and Personality* for an illuminating discussion of this matter, so far as concerns Christian theology.

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relation with God, and realise vividly the blessings of God's presence and holiness, and recognise Him to be the Lord, Father, and Judge, in whose service the soul is bound by love and admiration—this consummation of the soul is salvation."<sup>1</sup>

As regards the means of salvation, he says: "Man's salvation is effected under God's grace by faith, devotion, prayer, and submission to God's providence, by the love of man and love of God, which these instill into our hearts, and by the practice of virtue and piety."<sup>2</sup>

Now if salvation depends upon faith, devotion, prayer, and submission to God's providence, it must depend upon revelation. For none of these means of salvation could operate, unless in some way God was revealed to the soul. *Faith* requires the apprehension of a Being in whom the faith can rest. *Devotion* requires awareness of One whose qualities draw out the heart's loyalty and affection. *Prayer* needs the assurance that there is a Hearer of prayer. *Submission to God's providence* implies the notion of a Being whose purposes there is reason for accepting. When, therefore, we ask Rāṇāde, How is God revealed so that man can put faith and trust in Him?—his answer is first of all that there is in man a "religious faculty." The existence of that faculty is proved by the fact that religious worship has prevailed at all times, and in all countries, and among all races, and also by the fact that every individual is conscious of his helpless dependence upon a mysterious and sublime Power beyond him and over him. Through the revelations of God that are obtained from nature, from the inner world of the mind, from history, and from the lives of saints and prophets, there has taken place a "gradual and

<sup>1</sup> "A Theist's Confession of Faith," p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 270.

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progressive development of the idea which man's religious consciousness has framed of the Power beyond us which controls man and the world of matter." According to Rāṇaḍe's theology, then, the saving graces of faith, devotion, prayer, and submission to God's providence, are implanted in the soul by the revelation to it of God's character. The salvation that he has in view is one that respects man's personality. In saving human souls God acts not a like a potter fashioning the passive clay, but like a person helping a person. The grace of God, Rāṇaḍe realises, is a help which saves the soul by leading it to "fall in love with God," by attracting its faith and devotion simply through the revelation of what God *is*.

Rāṇaḍe's conviction that the core of true religion is found in a moral and personal relation between the soul and God, is reflected in the zest with which he traces the parallel between the Protestant Reformation in Europe and the work of the saints and prophets of Mahārāshṭra. The Protestants' protest against the authority of the priest, and against monasticism, and celibacy, he compares with the protest against the tyranny of Caste and against an unspiritual reliance on self-mortification, fasts, penances, and pilgrimages. The protest against image-worship and saint-worship is paralleled by the condemnation in theory and practice of polytheistic worship. The liberation from the shackles of Scholasticism and the Latin language is paralleled by the liberation from the dominance of Sanskrit. And he shows how, in both the reform movements, supreme emphasis is placed upon love and faith for the soul's acceptance with God.

Before turning from the consideration of Rāṇaḍe's theological views, we must state his opinion regarding the human soul. He believes that the soul is a spirit and has

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being by itself and is immortal. But he does not pretend to possess any accurate knowledge regarding its nature, or its origin, or its destination. He does not claim to know whether the soul was created or whether it is co-eternal with the Divine Spirit. He believes that man's present state is a state of probation or trial, and that according to a man's desert will happiness or misery be meted out to him in the next world. But the particular mode of the future existence, he regards as a mystery of the insoluble sort.

### XIII

## HISTORIAN AND EDUCATIONIST

**R**ĀNAḌE and Telang undertook to write a History of the Marāṭhās. With this in view Telang made a collection of material—a paper embodying the results of his researches being afterwards published under the title of *Gleanings from the Marāṭhā Chronicles*. The projected collaboration, owing to Telang's death, did not come about. But Rānaḍe went on to carry out the project by himself. Death prevented him also from completely fulfilling the purpose. However, we have from his pen a first volume of the History, entitled *The Rise of the Marāṭhā Power*, which was published in 1900. In this book Rānaḍe controverts the widely held theory that the rise of the Marāṭhās was little more than the outbursting of the "turbulent predatory spirit of the Hindus of Mahārāshṭra," which had been smothered for a time but broke out when the chance offered itself through the contentions among the Muhammadan conquerors—a theory which makes the History a haphazard chaos, devoid of moral interest. As against that view Rānaḍe seeks to show that in the Marāṭhā history the deep and persistent laws of moral cause and effect were powerfully and constantly at work. He shows, for example, what a great part was played in the evolution of events by the "saints and prophets of Mahārāshṭra." The religious movement of which they were the instruments "tended to raise the nation generally to



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a higher level of capacity both of thought and action, and prepared it, in a way no other nation in India was prepared, to take the lead in re-establishing a united native power in the place of foreign domination.”<sup>1</sup>

More than half the book is taken up with sketching and explaining the career of Śivāji, that Robert the Bruce of Marāṭhā history. Rāṇaḍe makes clear the greatness of Śivāji not only as a warrior but also as a statesman and organiser—a point which previous historians had apparently tended to ignore. His summing up of the man who founded the Power from which the rule of India passed to the British is as follows:

“Religious fervour, almost at white heat, bordering on the verge of self-abnegation, a daring and adventurous spirit born of a confidence that a higher power than man’s protected him and his work, the magnetism of superior genius which binds men together and leads them to victory, a rare insight into the needs of the times, and a steadfastness of purpose which no adverse turn of fortune could conquer, a readiness and resourcefulness rarely met with either in European or Indian history, true patriotism which was far in advance of the times, and a sense of justice tempered with mercy—these were the sources of the strength that enabled Śivāji to sow the seeds of a power which accomplished in the hands of his successors all that he had planned out, and enabled his race to write a chapter in Indian history to some purpose.”<sup>2</sup>

In February, 1899, Rāṇaḍe wrote an essay on the *Mints and Coins of the Marāṭhā Period*; and in June, 1900, he wrote two papers called, *Introduction to the Sātārā Rājā’s and the Peshwā’s Diaries*. In the latter we see how Rāṇaḍe rejoiced in the thought that, since the old

<sup>1</sup> *Rise of the Marāṭhā Power*, p. 172.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 57-58.

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Records at Poona had now been made available, it would be possible to write a history of the people of Mahārāshṭra which would not be merely a narration of political events, but which would reveal "the condition of the people, how they lived and thrived, the pleasures which amused them, their superstitions and their beliefs, their morals, their manners and their customs." He declared that the material contained in these State Diaries, which were kept by responsible officers in the Peshwā's Record Office, "shed a flood of light upon the real movements and the hopes and fears, the strength and weakness of the people for over a century, and for purposes of instruction and guidance, they far outweigh in value the narratives of wars and conquests, dynastic changes, and revolutions, which take up so much space in our ordinary histories."<sup>1</sup>

In the last or *Bombay* period of his career, Rāṇaḍe's mind was much occupied with two matters which are in a sense complementary—the one having its face turned towards the Past, and the other towards the Future. The one was his research into the history of Mahārāshṭra, which issued in the publication of the historical works that we have just mentioned, wherein he sought to place before the public the right interpretation of the events in the days of Śivājī and the Peshwās. The other was the endeavour to secure for the rising generation of Mahārāshṭra what he regarded as healthier conditions of University life and a better curriculum.

It was almost a matter of course that when he came to reside in Bombay he would take an active part in the affairs of the University, for besides the qualification of his own teaching experience, education had always been a

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Sātārā Rājā's and the Peshwā's Diaries*, pp. 1 and 2.

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cause dear to his heart. He was already a Fellow of the University, and now he became closely associated with the direction of its affairs as a member of the Senate and of the Syndicate and as Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Perhaps his most important work in this connection was the part he took in bringing the vernacular languages back into the University curriculum. In his own student days these languages had an equal place with Sanskrit, and he himself took Marāṭhī instead of Sanskrit in the degree examination.<sup>1</sup> But, in 1867, under the influence of Oxford savants at the Education Department, and in spite of the opposition of weighty men like Dr. John Wilson and Sir Raymond West, the vernaculars were dropped out of the curriculum. In 1881, agitation was begun for their reinstatement. In 1888 and in 1890, motions to insert the vernaculars in the curriculum were proposed in the Senate, but were defeated.

In 1894, Rāṇaḍe took the matter up personally. His idea was to get one vernacular book prescribed, alongside of the Sanskrit, Persian, and other classical languages. In his speech before the Senate he argued that it would not at all encourage caste or religious differences, and he ridiculed the notion that it would be any serious burden on the students to have to read a single book and write a few lines in the language that they were speaking day and night at home with their parents, wives, brothers, and sisters. He also urged that just as a person who cannot speak English cannot rightly be called an Englishman, so one who cannot speak Gujarātī cannot be called a man of

<sup>1</sup> Rāṇaḍe was, however, studying Sanskrit in 1863-4 with the help of a private tutor. We may also add here as a matter of interest that he had, in 1859, made some study of Latin, getting the length of reading *Cæsar* and *Horace*.

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Gujarāt, nor one who cannot speak Marāṭhī, a Marāṭhā, and so with Hindi and Kanarese. Rāṇaḍe's proposal was approved by the Faculty and the Syndicate, but the Senate turned it down. In 1898, he again introduced his vernacular resolution. This time he prepared the way by writing five articles, which were published in the Royal Asiatic Society's *Journal* and in *The Times of India*, regarding the advance of Marāṭhī literature. His object was to demonstrate that there were sufficient books in the language to justify its inclusion in the degree curriculum. He showed that there were, by general consent, 60 suitable books. The Syndicate appointed a Committee, consisting of Rāṇaḍe, Rev. Dr. Mackichan, and Sir Pherozechāh Mehtā to inquire into the matter, and on its favourable report, it was decided that the vernaculars should be included in the M.A. curriculum. This decision was made a few weeks after Rāṇaḍe's death.

The health of the students was another matter which arrested Rāṇaḍe's attention. It was a subject that had, during the previous ten years, been frequently discussed in the newspapers. When Rāṇaḍe decided to move in the matter, he acted with his customary thoroughness, sending out letters to 400 persons and asking them to call meetings in their respective areas to have the matter discussed. He received 140 replies. Thus having taken the opinions of graduates, and having inquired into the students' condition of living, and having carefully examined the mortality statistics, he came to the conclusion that the causes of the premature death of students were poverty and the heavy weight of the studies. Dr. Bhandārkar had also made a careful investigation of the matter, but his conclusion was that the high prevalence of premature death among the students was to be attributed to Hindu

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social conditions. The difference of opinion issued in a newspaper duel between the two celebrated protagonists.

In 1895, Rāṇaḍe made an endeavour to get the weight of studies lessened for the students. At that time candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts were required to pass two other examinations in addition to the Final Examination. Rāṇaḍe proposed (1) that there should be only one Intermediate Examination, and (2) that a student who obtained 45 per cent. of marks in a subject at his first sitting should be exempted from re-examination in that subject. In support of his case Rāṇaḍe made a detailed, statistical comparison with the practice of many other Universities, showing thereby that there was no need for more than *two* examinations, and also that the value of the examination would not suffer by allowing the principle of the "department-pass." On the vote, however, both his motions were defeated. But he had the satisfaction of seeing the idea adopted for the District Pleaders' Examination, and had he lived another score of years he would have seen the Bombay University adopt both his proposals.

Conscious as he was of the industrial needs of India, Rāṇaḍe came to Bombay very keen upon the development of technical education. He was appointed to the Advisory Committee which was formed to make arrangement regarding the expenditure of 30 lakhs which N. J. Tata had donated for the purpose of Industrial education. Rāṇaḍe flung himself into the work of that committee with all the vigour of his intelligence and his enthusiasm. The outcome of the committee's work was the Tata Industrial Research Institute, at Bangalore.

We may quote here an impression which a former Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University, Mr. Justice Candy, has

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left us regarding Rāṇaḍe's influence in the University Courts. He says:

"In my capacity as Chairman of the Syndicate, experience of Rāṇaḍe's work was constantly coming before me. When any awkward question came forward, at once everyone's eyes would turn in the direction of Rāṇaḍe. There was no other who could show the way out of a difficulty like him, and we all used to regard him as our guru. For saying this no one will charge me with exaggeration. Whatever the trouble and whoever the person in difficulty, Rāṇaḍe would never turn a deaf ear—that was certain. He had the patience of the saints, he was entirely free from guile or hypocrisy, and everyone was spontaneously drawn to him."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Translated from the Marāṭhī as quoted in Phāṭak's न्यायमूर्ति*  
रानडे p. 580.



## XIV

### CLOSING MONTHS

IN 1895, Rāṇaḍe's physical constitution began to break up. From then onwards his health was always uncertain, and tended to become worse each successive year. When battling with his ill-health, he used to go to the hills at Loṇāvlā, Mātherān, or Mahābḷeśwar, or to the sea-side at Bāndra. Instead of resting quietly at these places, however, he would work hard from ten till four, studying and writing, and dealing with his immense correspondence. If Mrs. Rāṇaḍe protested, his defence was that for him killing time was not resting. When he was at Mahābḷeśwar, in the hot weather of 1899, he got sunstroke, and for a fortnight his memory was seriously affected. His weak eye-sight and poor health led him in these latter years to employ one or two students to read aloud to him and to write to his dictation. One of the students who thus became intimate with Rāṇaḍe was V. G. Kāle. He is now well-known in India for his writings on Economics, and for his work in the Council of State, and on the Tariff Board—three forms of activity that his old master would have rejoiced to see.

As the year 1899 wore on, Mrs. Rāṇaḍe noticed in her husband a growing indifference to worldly affairs. She would see him holding a book or a paper in his hand, while his mind was evidently far away considering some other thing. The newspaper accounts of political, social,



RĀNADE'S STATUE  
IN BOMBAY

*Photograph by favour of the  
Sculptor, Mr. G. K. Mhatre*

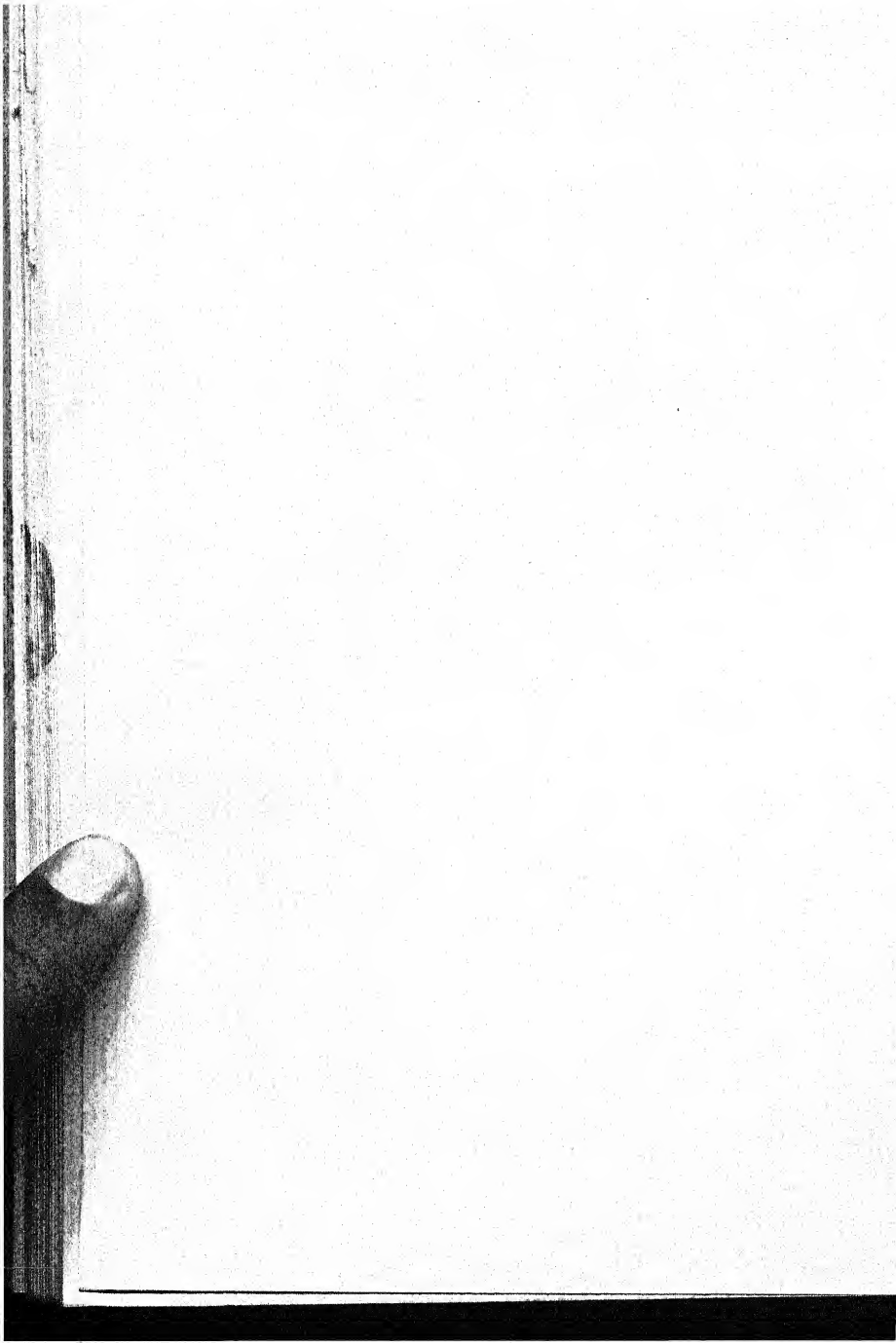
Inscription on the base of Rānade's statue in Bombay :

IN APPRECIATION  
OF HIS GREAT SERVICES  
AS SCHOLAR, JUDGE, CITIZEN, PATRIOT  
AND SOCIAL REFORMER

THIS STATUE  
HAS BEEN ERECTED BY PUBLIC  
SUBSCRIPTION HERE AND IN INDIA  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
MAHADEV GOVIND RANADE, M.A., LL.B., C.I.E.

*Born : 1842.*

*Died : 1901.*



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and industrial activities did not appear to interest him so intensely as formerly. He seemed frequently to be absorbed in spiritual meditation. The keen eye of his wife noticed also that he was deliberately regulating his eating and drinking. When questioned on the matter he would pretend not to hear and, if possible, would avoid answering. Mrs. Rāṇaḍe tried to induce him to eat more by putting before him tempting fruits and favourite dishes, but in vain. When she plaintively suggested that the reason must be that she had not cooked the food nicely, he would reply, "It is perfectly good, but why should we eat just because a thing is good? We must observe some moderation in our eating." On one such occasion, after asserting that a man ought to aim at decreasing the power of the animal in him and at increasing the power of the Divine qualities, and that the only way to do so was by development of self-control, he said :

"If we assert that we are parts of God, then should not His qualities appear in us from day to day? There are superior blessed mortals who exercise complete self-control, but such perfection is beyond us who are immersed in the world's numberless affairs, and whose souls become distorted by the senses. Nevertheless, we ought to do something, in proportion to what little strength we have."<sup>1</sup>

Watching her husband carefully, Mrs. Rāṇaḍe discovered that he was never taking more than thirty-two mouthfuls at each meal.

In September, 1900, Mrs. Rāṇaḍe fell ill, and her doctor declared that she required to undergo an operation. Rāṇaḍe counselled her to wait a little and try the effect of medicines. She was much perplexed about the matter, as

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आठवणी p. 265.

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she did not want to bring additional worry upon her husband while his own health was so precarious. However she became much worse, and one day Rānade had to be summoned hurriedly from the Court. Two other doctors who were consulted also advised operation, and Rānade was persuaded to consent, though he pointed out to his wife that even without it she would still be able to go about the house and superintend everything, could be lifted out to the carriage for drives, and could enjoy reading and writing, and he asked her why she should needlessly take her life in her hands. Rānade had not slept at all on the night of that day when his wife's condition had caused him to be hurriedly called from the Court. She heard him on the other side of the partition, turning from side to side uttering "Rām, Rām" in a dejected voice, and four or five times she was aware of him stealing up to her bed to see if she were asleep—on which occasions she always feigned to be sleeping. Again, on the night previous to the operation, he did not sleep at all.

Mrs. Rānade tells us what her own reflections were on the night before the operation, and they afford us some interesting sidelights. She imagined what the effect would be on Rānade if she were to die on the morrow. He was unaccustomed to look after his own more private affairs, and had come to rely upon her greatly for his personal conveniences. He did not like treatment or attention from any one but herself—e.g., in the matter of the service of meals, administration of medicines, massaging of body and head, etc. The other folk in the household were careful and interested, but they did not understand him as she did, and his reserve would prevent him from letting them minister to him as she had done. Moreover, he was himself in such poor health that it

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seemed a special pity she should be taken away just then. She reflected on the happiness and the glory that had fallen to her, through her marriage. It was true God had denied them the supreme earthly happiness of having children, but both of them accepted that without dejection or complaint, filled up the lack in other ways, and rejoiced in the state in which they were. With a becoming modesty she thought how, except for the fact that she was of good family, there was nothing to fit her for marriage with Rāṇaḍe—no beauty, no talents, no knowledge. It was only through God's gracious favour that there had been given to her the happiness of so blessed a life union, and she had hardly thought of the possibility of its coming to an end.<sup>1</sup>

The operation was successfully performed, and three weeks after it, they decided to go off to Mātherān. The doctor, hearing of this intention, said that Mrs. Rāṇaḍe must on no account be moved for a fortnight more. So Rāṇaḍe, who was badly needing a holiday, went off alone, at his wife's urgent insistence.

Already in the month of August, the disease, *pseudo angina pectoris*, which in the end caused his death, had laid firm hold upon him. Its chief symptom was a spasm of the heart, a kind of muscular cramp, that came on regularly about 10-30 every night, and that lasted for 15 or 20 minutes. The spasms ceased on the night before Mrs. Rāṇaḍe's operation, but ten days or so after he had gone to Mātherān, his wife was distressed to get a letter telling her that the old trouble had begun again, and the next day she set out to join her husband. They returned to Bombay at the end of the holiday, and he was able to carry on with his

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rāṇaḍe, आटवणी pp. 285-6.



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usual work and occupations, though there was constantly present the shadow of these nightly seizures.

Rāṇaḍe asked the doctors what his disease was called, but he got no satisfactory answer, and he began to think that they were deliberately refraining from telling him. He, therefore, resolved to find out for himself, and in some books obtained from the Medical College he identified his symptoms and made himself familiar with all the details of his disease. At first he showed an anxious interest in his illness and talked much about it. But from the month of October onwards he seems to have attained to an attitude of Stoic indifference. He seems to have resolved that whatever happened he would endure quietly and, as far as possible, let no one see his suffering. When pain was specially severe, he used merely to ask for massage or for foment. Only on his bed would he let himself go a little and would moan as he turned from side to side. Though he knew from the medical books the serious nature of his malady, he did not allow his outward conduct to be affected. But he could not prevent the sympathetic Ramābāī from sensing the shadow, and her tender heart was melted with pity and apprehension so that daily she wept over it.

The doctor advised Rāṇaḍe to rest much, and the home folk pressed this advice on him. But he did not follow it. He would keep reading and writing constantly all day. He seemed resolved that not a moment of his remaining time must be lost.

On 24th November, 1900, in the Frāmjī Cowasjī Institute, at Bombay, Rāṇaḍe unveiled the portrait of Dādābhāī Naorojī. On that occasion he made his last public speech. After describing the virtues of the Grand Old Man of the Indian political movement, he said, "In the modern conditions of life the India that is to be born

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will have no room for mere distinction of race, creed, colour. We aspire all of us to be Indians first and Indians to the last over every other condition which has separated us so long and made a united India impossible." After saying something of the periods of Conquest and Consolidation under the British Government he continued, "We are in the third condition of Reconciliation or Reconstruction, and for that condition Dādābhāi has done his proper duty. The India of the past we can never hope to revive, but the India of the future it is for us to shape and to fashion."<sup>1</sup> While finishing this address, he had one of his seizures, but he leant on a post that was behind him, and as the attack passed off in a few minutes, his audience never knew of it.

In December, 1900, he was eagerly anticipating the Social Conference at Lahore, for which he had written a paper entitled, "Vasīshṭha and Vishvamitra." But his heart spasms had been getting worse, and it was with very great regret that, on the day before they were to set out, he gave way to the insistence of his friends and decided to obey the doctor's advice not to go to the Conference. Pen and paper were brought and Rāṇaḍe wrote a telegram to the effect that he would not be able to be present that year. He read to the company what he had written, and told them that for eighteen years there had been no intermission in his attendance—and his voice was thick and his eyes were filled with tears as he spoke. He found comfort, however, in the thought that two such able followers as Gokhale and Chandāwarkar, were ready to bear forward the banner that he had so long carried.

Two days afterwards Rāṇaḍe went off to Loṇāvlā.

<sup>1</sup> Phāṭak, न्यायमूर्ति रानडे p. 591.

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There he read and wrote, working on a collection of Dharma Śāstra Texts useful for Hindu Law, and preparing an essay for C. Y. Chintāmaṇi's book on Social Reform. He stayed for ten days, his health getting steadily worse. On returning to Bombay at the beginning of January, he wrote to the High Court asking for six months leave of absence, and he told Ramābāi that at the end of it he intended to retire. On the 14th, alarming symptoms developed, but on the morning of the 16th, he felt specially clear-headed, and said that the doctor need not make his usual visit that day. In the evening he had a drive and a walk in company with his wife and his half-brother. On returning home he received a wire intimating the death of a friend, and his comment, after expressing his regret at the loss, was, "What a happy death it is to die while one is working." The time before the evening meal was passed in dictating a number of letters, and in discussing with some visitors the preparations for a forthcoming widow remarriage. After supper his sister sang for him some of his favourite verses from the Prārthanā Samāj hymn-book, and then he settled to read a chapter of Justin M'Carthy's *History of Our Own Times*, which together with the Upanishads and Milner's *History of Christianity* had been his latest studies. Soon however the nightly spasm came on, this time with such extreme severity that Rānade cried out, "Better come death than the endurance of this pain." As the seizure did not pass off a doctor who lived nearby was hastily summoned, and he at once saw that this time Rānade was beyond the power of human aid. A quarter of an hour after the seizure began, with his head resting upon his wife's shoulder, he passed away.

When the news of his death spread over the land, a very real sense of loss was felt among high and low, rich and

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poor. The great concourse of people of different races, castes, and creeds who joined in the funeral procession was eloquent of the high esteem in which he had been widely held. The body with proper ceremony was given to the flames in the burning ghāt at Bombay, and the ashes were consigned to the Trivenī at Allāhābād, where the Ganges, the Jamnā, and the Saraswatī mingle their waters.

So passed a great patriot and a great social servant. So passed a leader who, if he wrought no sensational deliverance for his Israel, yet by his wise, many sided, and fruitful activities laid broad and deep foundations for the structure of freedom. Sir Pherozechāh Mehtā once said that he measured the greatness of England not by her material strength but by her ability to produce men of such intellectual grasp and wide moral sympathies as Lord Ripon and Major Baring. We for our part close this book with the thought that India's greatness may well be measured by the fact that she could produce a Mahādev Govind Rāṇaḍe.



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